Problems of Communism

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Revolt From Within

THE Soviet post-Stalin campaign of political "liberalization" and relaxation has suffered a number of major setbacks in the past few months. There has been the spreading disintegration of the rigid ideological uniformity of foreign Communist parties. There has been the ferment in Eastern Europe, erupting into the dramatic October Revolutions in Poland and Hungary. And finally, there have been signs that within the USSR itself there has been a mounting wave of unrest and dissatisfaction, particularly among groups that have been the perennial targets of the ideological *gauleiters* in the Kremlin — intellectuals, students, and even workers.

The departure from Stalinist orthodoxy, the promises of greater freedom and political moderation, may not have affected the bulk of the Soviet population, cowed into submission and fear by years of terror and repression, but they had an enormous impact on the intelligentsia, whose professional status had come into conflict with the frequently irrational doctrinal demands of the totalitarian state. It did not take long, then, for Soviet writers to come forward with pleas for "sincerity" and "creativeness" in Soviet literature. Artists began to question the hallowed principle of "socialist realism" and to challenge the party's total control in all areas of creative endeavor. Marxist dogma began to be subjected to the most minute scrutiny. Scientists, emboldened by the downfall of Stalinist charlatans (e.g., Lysenko) and the repudiation of the ludicrous claims to Russian and Soviet scientific supremacy, increased their contacts with the "decadent West" and sharply limited their invocations of Marxist-Leninist "classics". In short, the myth, so studiously cultivated by the Kremlin, and so uncritically accepted by the outside world, of a society thoroughly indoctrinated, and deprived of any capacity for independent thinking whatsoever, simply went up in smoke.

THE extent of the passive revolt against ideological conformity must have come as a surprise to the men in the Kremlin. Not that Stalin's "comrades in arms" had been unaware of the limits to the effectiveness of enforced political indoctrination. Their very attempt to loosen the reins of control testified to their conviction that the Stalinist method of intellectual terror was leading Soviet society into a blind alley. Yet it must have come as a shock to them to realize how tenuous and superficial was their ideological hold over the mind of the "Soviet man". How far would this process go? There was no way of telling. A concerted drive to curtail the ferment was therefore initiated. Soviet intellectuals were encouraged to express themselves more freely; but they were also grimly warned against excesses which could only lead to "rotten bourgeois liberalism". Greater experimentation is desirable, they were told in effect, but whoever questions the principle of party control was clearly a purveyor of pernicious anti-Soviet ideas. At times this double-barrelled attack, this desperate attempt to have the best of both possible worlds reached almost ridiculous proportions, as in this excerpt from an article dealing with the evils of the "cult of personality":

> . . . the clash of opinions, on a foundation of Marxist-Leninist principles, must be thoroughly encouraged and developed; there must be firm opposition to the use of derogatory labels and denunciatory criticism of opponents in a discussion . . . Of course, there can be no compromise with views and pronouncements hostile to Marxism. The struggle for purity of this theory must be kept in the foreground. It must be remembered firmly that we are for peaceful coexistence of states with diverse social systems, but against peaceful coexistence of ideologies, since that would mean ideological disarmament. But this, we repeat, does not exclude the clash of opinions—of course within the framework of allegiance to the party and Marxism—a clash in the course of which incorrect tenets and conclusions are rejected and a common viewpoint is worked out. (*Kommunist,* No. 10, August 1956).

But the frantic appeals were to no avail. Khrushchev's speech at the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU, which in effect made mockery of the Communist claim to political and ideological infallibility, coupled with the explosions in Eastern Europe, had a shattering effect on the already crumbling ideological morale of the Soviet citizenry. The revolt of the Hungarian nation, which even the

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trained dialecticians of *Pravda* and *Izvestia* could not adequately "explain", and Gomulka's victory followed by his bold determination to "tell the truth to the Polish people", evoked sympathy and admiration, particularly among Soviet university students. Too sophisticated not to see through the fatuous platitudes of their mentors (the tricks of inserting the prefix "counter" before "revolution" and downgrading "crimes" to mere "mistakes" could not work forever), students organized "discussion meetings" at which party dignitaries were openly ridiculed and booed. Still proclaiming their loyalty to the basic principles of socialism, Soviet students nevertheless wished to know how their society, the "freest in the world", could produce people like Beria, and why another socialist party in addition to the Communist Party could not be allowed to exist. Among workers (whose average monthly wage is about 800 rubles), questions began to be raised about the enormous income differentiations in Soviet society (whose "leading members" receive as much as 20,000 or even 40,000 rubles per month). The danger of exposing the population to the works of Lenin, with their promises of "socialist egalitarianism" could not have been lost on the Soviet leaders.

THE reaction of the party to all these manifestations of unrest, after futile attempts to direct them into politically advantageous channels, was, typically, to tighten the screws, to call for an end to "petit bourgeois influences", and to demand more party guidance and indoctrination. On November 8, Nikita Khrushchev, who had done so much to unleash the wave of unrest, openly expressed his concern about "the younger generation", and demanded that the party "pay more attention to the correct upbringing of youth." Shortly thereafter, Molotov—who had apparently by this time become the party's "supervisor" in matters of culture—emphatically reasserted the monopoly of "socialist realism" as the "basis of further artistic creation." It did not take long for Soviet newspapers to take up the new line. The old familiar slogans of "vigilance" and "Bolshevik discipline" began to recur with monotonous regularity. Ominous references to "alien views", "rotten elements", "capitalist survivals", "unhealthy tendencies" again filled the columns of newspapers and magazines throughout the country. Earlier pleas for less bureaucratic interference in the arts and belles-lettres were now roundly condemned. The country was suddenly found to be honey-combed with "American spies". While Stalin was still in many respects *"persona non grata"*, Stalinism, in the form of stifling ideological uniformity, seemed to be making a comeback.

Yet what will be the outcome of the present backward trend in the direction of a more militant, "Bolshevik" ideological policy? The reliance upon ideological control, the Soviet leaders must surely know by now, is bound to fail in its ultimate aim. It may result in greater docility on the part of the population, it may restore the facade of unanimity (in itself important to a totalitarian regime), but it cannot remake and reeducate men's minds. That much the events of the past few years have undoubtedly demonstrated.

But, most important, the exclusive reliance upon indoctrination would only bring back the ills that the post-Stalin leadership has been struggling to eliminate. You cannot expect scientists to experiment freely while they are being instilled with fear of foreign "contamination." You cannot exhort artists to ever greater "triumphs" by curtailing their efforts at self-expression. You cannot raise a generation of self-reliant men by insulting their intelligence, by telling them *ad nauseam,* in the words of the Polish poet Adam Wazyk, "that a lion is a little lamb", and "that a little lamb is a lion." Creativity, initiative and progress are, in the final sense, incompatible with total terror and *gleichschaltung.*

The party leaders are aware of that, and this is why their current campaign has in fact stopped short of a return to Stalinist tactics. Of course, if its political monopoly is ever threatened in the future, the Kremlin may yet at least *attempt* to drag the country back into the morass of Stalinism. But thus far the call is merely for "intensive ideological work", for more "agitation and propaganda", for "closer ties with the people", for greater "militancy." There have been expulsions from universities but no threats of arrests, terror, police methods. The party leaders know full well that a return to these methods would also mean a return to sterility, bureaucratic stagnation, and an atmosphere of fear and suspicion that would jeopardize their dynamic political and economic program, both at home and abroad. This explains the half-hearted nature of the new "vigilance campaign", its purely *verbal* vehemence, its resort to "persuasion" in lieu of wholesale repression, and the absence of abject *mea culpas,* recantations and other hallmarks of the bygone era. And this explains, too, why the drive to preserve the *status quo* on the "ideological front" will most likely end in a resounding failure. For, in their efforts simultaneously to goad and control the minds of men, the Soviet leaders simply find themselves embroiled in one of those many "insoluble contradictions" with which their entire empire is seething.

A. B.

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Communism's Year of Crisis

EDITORS' NOTE: In the last issue of this magazine Mr. Brzezinski discussed the impact of the "destalinization" campaign on the entire Soviet bloc, which under Stalin had been characterized, in his words, "by ideological unity and dictatorial centralization of power." But "ideological unity" had also been a hallmark of the *foreign* Communist bloc, and the weakening of that unity is as much a symptom of the sickness that has afflicted the heirs of Lenin as were the explosions in Hungary and Poland. Mr. Treadgold's article diagnoses this illness on a worldwide basis, whereas Mr. Grainger dissects one small area under affliction—the Communist Party of Great Britain. Future issues of *Problems of Communism* will examine the repercussions of "destalinization" among pro-Communist intellectuals in Western Europe, as well as the most recent manifestations of unrest in the USSR itself.

Troubled Conscience of the Foreign Parties

By DONALD W. TREADGOLD

THE faith of the dedicated Communist in the veracity of his beliefs and in Soviet leadership of the world Communist movement has undergone tests in the past, but never has there been evidence of such a profound and widespread crisis of conscience in party ranks as became manifest under the impact of the two major developments of the past year in the Soviet orbit—the baring of Stalin's crimes at the Twentieth CPSU Congress and the spontaneous, ruthlessly suppressed Hungarian popular revolt against Communist rule.

In a sense, crisis is a permanenet element in the life of all Communists and Communist parties. Party members accept an unlimited commitment of a quasi-military nature, one which is not circumscribed by "civilian" institutional safeguards and which subordinates all personal and family concerns to the demands of total war. This commitment does not terminate until the end of the "class struggle," which means, in effect, the end of any form of struggle against Communist leadership.

The military element in communism is a heritage from Marx, given new substance and emphasis by the Russian Bolsheviks. During the period of the Second International, many European Marxists laid down their arms, figuratively speaking, and in so doing abandoned orthodox Marxism. Nevertheless there still were groups of uncompromising militants outside Russia in 1919, and it was upon them that Lenin relied in forging the international Communist movement. Stalin benefited from the growth of their numbers as Soviet power and prestige, despite setbacks, mounted.

During the rule of Stalin, the total commitment of the individual Communist came to rest upon two fundamental beliefs. The first was that communism embodied the will of the workers and stood, if not for what they actually wanted in the present, at least for what they ought to want and would want eventually, much as a man learns retrospectively what was good for him as a child. The second was that nothing fundamentally wrong

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could occur in the Soviet Union (or later, in other Communist states) simply because the party of the workers was in power there; misguided individuals might criticize or balk at directives but the top leadership would always be dedicated to the workers' cause, even when compelled to resort to harsh measures for the sake of the golden future.

Often in the past these convictions of the party faithful have been subjected to severe strain by the brutalities of Soviet policy and by the contradictory and frequently cynical turns in the party line emanating from Moscow. In the 1930's Communists had to justify Stalin's ruthless liquidation of millions of peasants in the enforcement of collectivization. During the Great Purge they had to accept the "revelation" that all members of Lenin's Politburo except Stalin and Lenin himself had been traitors and were deserving of death. They also have had to debase themselves by conforming to innumerable shifts in the Moscow political line—to woo the Socialists during some periods and war against them during others; to combat Hitler in the days of the Popular Front, accept him during the period of the Hitler-Stalin Pact, and fight him again after June 1941; and to regard Tito first as good, then bad, and finally good again. With each such shock some comrades found it impossible to still their troubled consciences and left the party. But most were able to rationalize each directive as it was issued, and to hold to their faith in the essential correctness of the top Soviet leadership and their belief that it represented the workers.

Perhaps never, however, have Communists had to face such a direct challenge to the two fundaments of their faith as that posed by the developments of the past year. For Khrushchev's attack on Stalin was a bald acknowledgement that many of the bitter pills of past policy had been not the reluctant decisions of an omniscient leader for the sake of the future, but the cynical dictates of a tyrant corrupted by power. The concept of infallible leadership went down the drain. While foreign Communists were wrestling with their reactions to this revelation, the whole working class of a Communist country joined with the rest of the population in a struggle to overthrow the regime by force. The double impact of these events was bound to cause serious eruptions in Communist ranks.

Khrushchev's Address

THE present crisis of world communism was immediately precipitated by the U. S. State Department's publication of Khrushchev's "secret speech" on June 4. Palmiro Togliatti, head of the Italian Communists, was among the first of the foreign fold to react, demanding in lengthy exhortation how it was possible that so many errors had not prevented so many successes," and calling for a full "Marxist" explanation of Stalin's misdeeds.[1] Other party leaders or organs quickly followed suit, including the French Politburo and the British party's Executive Committee, as well as Nenni, leader of the fellow-traveling Italian Socialist Party.

The tenor of reactions differed from country to country and within parties. In several of the statements issued, the call for a further "Marxist" explanation clearly implied skepticism that an individual capable of such crimes could wield power unless there was something basically wrong with the social system. To Khrushchev, now presiding over the same system, this implication probably seemed a greater threat than the demand, voiced as vigorously by some parties, that he and the other leaders explain what they had been doing while Stalin committed his crimes. Almost universally the foreign parties criticized the fact that they had not had prior access to the text of Khrushchev's speech and had therefore had to rely on "enemy" sources for enlightenment. In Great Britain certain Communists set up a special organ called *The Reasoner* as a vehicle for public analysis and criticism of what had happened. The New York *Daily Worker* opened its pages to letters from comrades, some of whom defended Stalin against attack, while others went so far as to call for liquidation of the party altogether. At the other extreme, a few parties took a cautious stand in line with the advice of the Dutch Communist leader Paul de Groot, who suggested that party members be "discreet" in their discussions and professed satisfaction with Khrushchev's explanations.

The turmoil in party ranks was widely discussed in the non-Communist press. Not all commentators, however, were able to disentangle statements adhering to the new line from those expressing dissent. For example, it was observed that the foreign Communists, almost to a man, found the disclosures of Khrushchev "shocking." Yet that was precisely what Khrushchev had intended them to be, and up to a point the reaction was probably what he wanted. (The revelations, of course, were "shocking" to nobody *but* the Communists; anyone else even mildly conversant with the state of affairs in the Soviet Union had long known the truth of Khrushchev's charges—knew, indeed, that he had barely skimmed

[1] Palmiro Togliatti, "9 Domande sullo Stalinismo," (Nine Demands on Stalinism) *Nuovi Argomenti,* No. 20, June 16, 1956, quoted in *The Anti-Stalin Campaign and International Communism,* Columbia University Press; New York, 1956, p. 126.

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the surface of Stalin's crimes.[2]) Some commentators noted, on the other hand, that certain Communist leaders were defending Stalin. But so had Khrushchev, who has not since abandoned the position that Stalin expressed the interests of the proletariat and was a "strong" Marxist, despite his "errors."

Khrushchev had been forced to advance a weak "explanation" for his own and his colleagues' seeming paralysis under Stalin, but he had alluded to no shortcomings in the leadership since 1953. It was on this score that genuine dissidence became manifest, *i.e.*, the point at which foreign comrades linked the demand for further "Marxist analysis" with questions concerning the pre-1953 role of the current leadership, in such terms that their present status was by implication also called into question.

Explanations and Excuses

BY June 30 the Central Committee of the Soviet party felt it necessary to give reply to the foreign Communists.[3] A lengthy official statement attempted to minimize the prevailing discord: "Let the bourgeois ideologists concoct fables about the 'crises' of communism, about 'confusion' in the ranks." Then it turned around and undertook to explain the confusion which it denied existed. Certain comrades were "not completely clear on the question of the personality cult . . ." "How could it have arisen?" asked the Central Committee, repeating the most embarrassing question raised by Communists abroad. The answer was that the situation at the time of the dictator's ascension had "demanded an iron discipline . . . vigilance . . . strictest centralization of leadership"—an answer which might well have been written by the ghost of Stalin himself. In its most damaging admission, the CC added that Stalin had gone too far with repression on the mistaken theory that the class struggle would become sharper as socialism came nearer. Thereby it demolished the entire theoretical justification for the terrors of the past.

The best the CC could manage by way of apologia for Khrushchev and his colleagues was to report vaguely that sometimes there had been "counteraction against the negative manifestations" of the "personality cult." Any overt act against Stalin would not have been "understood" by the people, who to a man loved the "Vozhd." Above all, Communists were wrong to seek the sources of Stalin's misconduct in the "nature of the Soviet system," or to believe that the former had affected the latter. However limp this attempt to vindicate the leadership and perpetuate the *status quo,* it was clearly the main purpose of the entire statement: nothing was wrong with the system; there had been a partly good, partly bad man who was now dead, so all was well—or would be when the present leaders had written a few new textbooks and the like.

The Central Committee statement criticized only one foreign Communist by name: Togliatti. He took his spanking meekly. Promptly a number of foreign party leaders (including Italians) were invited to Moscow. They returned declaring that all was harmony. Thereafter the public airing of protests started to die down, though a few of the smaller parties still raised querulous voices. The Trieste party, for example, referred sharply to the "absolute contrast between what they [Khrushchev and company] were saying of Stalin yesterday and what they say today"; the Swedish party organ suggested that "an attempt is being made to circumvent the core of the problem"—that is, the proper role of the present, not the past, leadership. The Danish party admitted the "confusion" in party ranks which the Soviets had just declared nonexistent. On the whole, however, Moscow had succeeded in shelving the debate, or at least pushing it out of public view.

The 1956 October Revolutions

THE foreign parties scarcely had time to recover a measure of equilibrium before the autumn crises of Eastern Europe were upon them. Right on the heels of Poland's "peaceful revolution" toward decontrol from Moscow came the tragically heroic uprising of the Hungarian people in their struggle for freedom—and the brutal suppression of that revolt by Moscow. The impact of the Soviet slaughter in Hungary on world public opinion was, as many demonstrations attested, one of shocked if helpless anger. In this climate, what was the reaction among foreign Communists?

The immediate response of small minorities of party members (and also fellow travelers) in several countries of the West was a total break of their ties with communism. Defections occurred both among intellectuals—including several prominent past apologists for Moscow—and among workers, the latter particularly in Italy but also in France, England and elsewhere.

Aside from these clear-cut breaks, however, it has been difficult to determine the extent to which the

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[2] For critical evaluations of Khrushchev's speech, see *The New Leader's* 1956 pamphlet entitled "The Crimes of the Stalin Era," containing the text of the speech with annotations by Boris I. Nicolaevsky; see also Bertram D. Wolfe, *Khrushchev and Stalin's Ghost* (Praeger, New York, 1957).

[3] Text published in *Pravda,* July 2, 1956, translated in full in *The Anti-Stalin Campaign,* p. 276 ff.

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Hungarian tragedy has produced a new crisis of conscience in the Communist rank-and-file, or even to distinguish degrees of dissidence and acquiescence among the various leaderships. Public statements of different party elements have manifested obvious confusion and embarrassment. Some of them have been partially condemnatory toward the Soviet Union, but most have ended by defending the suppression of the revolt as "necessary" on the grounds that "reactionary" forces had assumed control. This defense has followed the line of Tito's classic statement of November 11 at Pula, in which he distinguished between the two Soviet interventions of October 24 and November 4. The first, Tito had said, was wrong because there was as yet no "counter-revolution." Of the second, he asserted that if it "saves socialism in Hungary," then he could say that "although we are against interference, Soviet intervention was necessary."

A typical statement was that of the National Committee of the American CP. Declaring that the upheavals in Hungary as well as in Poland were "initially and primarily popular upsurges for democratization . . .", it asserted that Geroe had been in error when he first called in Soviet troops, but also that the Soviets must share the blame. However, the Committee continued, shortly afterward a "White Terror" began, and "reactionary and fascist" elements appeared. Although the statement ended ambiguously, the implied justification for the intervention was clear.[4]

A more obvious instance of confusion was furnished by a December editorial in the "independent socialist" *Monthly Review*. It began with a flat declaration that "any claim the Soviet Union had to moral leadership of the world socialist movement is now extinguished," and talked of the "hope and enthusiasm" which would return once "socialist" parties began to work out their own national destinies. However, a postscript to the very same editorial reported new information showing that "extreme reaction" had gained the upper hand by November 4 in Budapest. The postscript cited Tito's above-quoted statement and agreed with him that the situation constituted a "dilemma," for which a decision must rest "in future practice, not in past theorizing"—that is, the USSR was to be given another chance.[5]

Summing up the impact of the Hungarian uprising, it acted as a final catalyst upon the doubts of a number of foreign Communists, causing them to break with the movement; at the same time, many apparently ended by accepting the party line, expressed by William Z. Foster in the assertion that the suppression of the uprising was a "grim necessity."

New Trials, New Lessons

WHERE do the events of 1956 leave the present members of the world Communist movement? One is tempted to feel about those whose tie to communism survived the disillusioning lessons of the past year that no possible future development could affect their commitment. That is certainly true of some. As Ignazio Silone has pointed out, challenging the view that the Hungarian massacre "constitutes the supreme test of good faith and the final separation of the good from the wicked," there are some Communists for whom there will never be "one ultimate experience" of revelation leading to defection.[6]

The gradual erosion of faith, however, will continue to lead others to an eventual break with communism. Many men and women have left the party in the past. Many troubled persons who are today members will without doubt—as a result of some unforeseeable development—cut the cord sometime in the future. Their two fundamental beliefs have been shaken. They have been told by today's Soviet leaders that the former *Vozhd* made serious mistakes, under circumstances which suggest that the present leaders themselves did too and therefore might do so again; and although Khrushchev denies that either Stalin or he himself ever ceased to "represent the proletariat," some Communists may find the denial unconvincing. It was these same admittedly fallible Soviet leaders who ordered the massacre of the proletariat and other patriots of Hungary, branding their fight for freedom "fascist." Communists must have found this a far more bitter pill to swallow than the Soviet leaders' earlier protestations of virtue. Defections in the ranks came not after the Khrushchev speech, for the most part, but after the Hungarian uprising.

Both issues of value and issues of power are at stake in the future of international communism. Many party members are battling with a gnawing fear that instead of identifying themselves with the heirs of the Parisians of the National Workshops of 1848, they are trapped on the wrong side of the barricades with a latter-day Cavaignac, infinitely more powerful and brutal than the original. It was while the fighting raged in Budapest that Communists tore up their party cards. Yet since the Hun-

[4] Text of statement in *Political Affairs*, December 1956, p. 2 ff.

[5] Editorial in *Monthly Review*, New York, December 1956, pp. 259-272.

[6] Ignazio Silone, "After Hungary," *The New Leader*, January 21, 1957, p. 18.

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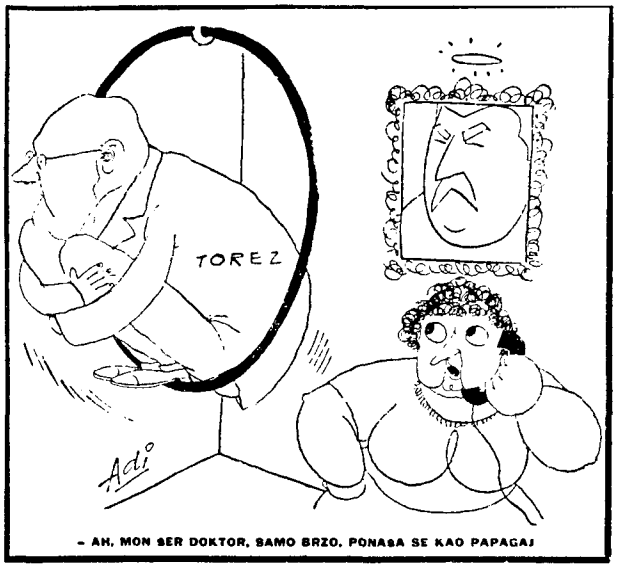
garian revolutionaries were finally crushed, how could those, who as Communists habitually think in terms of the "verdict of history," possibly be convinced that anti-Communist rebels were after all in the right?

The Soviets doubtless weighed various considerations before staking everything on ruthless military repression in Hungary. They calculated that the West could do nothing short of war to stop them; that they could succeed in smashing the revolt; and perhaps most important, that this success would ultimately hold the core of foreign Communists while simultaneously preventing their empire from disintegrating. Apparently they were right on all counts. The revolt was smashed; foreign comrades reacted with anguish, but only a minority with apostasy; and the empire has been at least temporarily saved.

Seeds of Decay

THE most interesting question of all in the events of 1956 is, surely, what led Khrushchev and company to take the great risks inherent in making peace with Tito, accepting Gomulka, and conducting the somewhat misnamed "destalinization" campaign, climaxing finally in the suppression of the Hungarians with brute force. To find the answer one must go deeper than the crisis in foreign Communist ranks, to the crisis in the Communist system itself—that is, the resistance to communism among the peoples of the Soviet Union and the satellites, among the young men and women who have demonstrated for freedom there, among the masses of workers and peasants who suffer under Communist oppression.



—Ah, my dear doctor, come quickly,
he's acting like a parrot.

—From *Oslobodjenje,* (Sarajevo), November 29-December 1, 1956.

In the orbit, where the Communist Party has a very different function from that of parties in free countries and where no alternative political organizations exist, popular dissatisfaction may be reflected in, or merge with, dissidence in the party. In the USSR itself, the measure of dissatisfaction among the Russian people must be assessed indirectly—through the Soviet leaders' warning against "disorder and panic" issued at Stalin's death, Malenkov's promise of more consumer goods in "two or three years," the leaders' tortured efforts to court popular approval by de-emphasizing and then criticizing Stalin himself, while continually promising various domestic changes.

It was in the satellites that the fires of dissatisfaction and disillusionment first broke into open flame. In Poland and Hungary writers and intellectuals spoke freely, even recklessly, months before the dramatic events of October. Adam Wazyk's much-discussed "Poem for Adults" had appeared in 1955. In the ferment following the Khrushchev speech, Polish writer Jerzy Putrament wrote: "The economic system that has been compulsory with us up to now has failed unquestionably and irrevocably . . . [It] could only operate in . . . conditions of suppression of criticism and police terror."[7] Whereas some Polish Communists spoke in approved fashion of how "we" had written this or had done that wrongfully, the art historian Karol Estreicher retorted, "We did not all do these things, only some of us . . ." and flatly denied that he, and others, were guilty of any complicity.[8] It was the intellectuals who articulated the protests of the populace, paving the way for workers who rose, struck, and fought at Poznan, and who supported students in Hungary.

In the Soviet Union itself, there had been rumors that some angry questioning took place in public meetings after the Khrushchev speech,[9] but it was only after the Hungarian revolution that the foreign press received reports of such astonishing demonstrations on a wide scale. A correspondent for the *New Statesman and Nation* wrote that "Speakers at lectures on the international situation were bombarded with questions about Hungary [10]; in mid-December, *Leningradskaia Pravda* ad-

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[7] Quoted by Anatole Shub in "Labor in the Soviet Orbit", *The New Leader,* December 24-31, 1956, p. 62.

[8] Quoted by K. A. Jelenski, "The Polish 'Earthquake'," *Encounter,* London, August 1956, p. 33.

[9] The author witnessed one in Yalta last summer.

[10] *The New Statesman and Nation,* November 24, 1956, p. 655.

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mitted that students were "discussing problems that are not to be discussed."[11]

* * *

IN the last analysis, it is precisely here—in the ferment of ideas among the younger generation of the Soviet orbit—that the real hope for the decline of world communism lies. Soviet power does not overawe them with a distant and misty glory, but means direct and immediate misery and repression. Recent events, combined with their own observation and questioning, are undermining their old values and leading them to reject communism without knowing as yet what they want to accept instead. In the summer of 1956 this author was asked by young Soviet Communists whether he thought that all would be well "if we went back to pure Marxism"; there was also a great deal of curiosity about the workings of the American capitalist system. Some of the questions were extremely naive, yet they all testified to a restless search for a new orientation, to a continuous attempt to clutch at whatever bits of information, thought, or history there are within reach. It is these young men and women without knowledge of any other political movement or label than the Communist one who are being drawn into—and thus may yet lead—the process of revolutionary ferment that has begun in the Communist world. If it is true that the Communists can best be understood by remembering that the devil is a fallen angel, it may also be true that the saints of our century may rise straight out of hell.

[11] Quoted by Shub, *loc, cit.*, p. 71.

The Crisis in the British CP

By G. W. GRAINGER

SINCE the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU and the historic Khrushchev "secret" speech vilifying Stalin, the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB) has been in an obvious state of turmoil. From the statements of the Executive Committee and the individual pronouncements of prominent party figures on the Stalin issue, one is forced to conclude either that the party leaders genuinely believed what they were saying—that Stalin's crimes had been mere "mistakes" resulting from the error of allowing one man to arrogate to himself excessive power—or that, without believing it themselves, they nevertheless hoped to secure general acceptance of this thesis within the party. Whether naive or cunning, the explanations consistently minimized Stalin's malfeasances as unimportant when weighed against the great achievements of Soviet economic development credited to his leadership. They also sought to persuade the party that with self-criticism now carried out, the Communist house was once more in order.[1]

For many party members, however, the first leakages of the gist of Khrushchev's speech had been a disturbing stimulus to thought, the first serious undermining of an uneasy network of beliefs. They began asking some fundamental questions and suspected the party leadership of trying to dodge them. Letters voicing profound dissent began to appear in the *Daily Worker*. The party's top policy-making body, the Political Committee, reacted hastily by ordering the paper to cease publishing this embarrassing correspondence, but was obliged to reverse itself under vigorous pressure from readers. Party leaders, speaking at wholly Communist gatherings in various parts of the country, found themselves facing hostile audiences.

[1] This was the position taken by George Matthews, Assistant Secretary of the CPGB, in his report on the Twentieth CPSU Congress, published in the party weekly organ, *World News*, March 17, 1956. The Executive Committee had ratified this position in a resolution passed at its meeting of March 10-11.

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The dissenters wanted to know why Yugoslavia had been expelled from the Cominform; what was going to be done about the many imprisoned Titoists; how it was possible for one man to assume so much power if the USSR was really a socialist state; why Khrushchev, Molotov and their associates had done nothing to curb Stalin's power during his lifetime. How true, they asked, were the charges levelled against so many of the old Bolsheviks in the purges of the 1930's, and why had they not been told before by their own leadership and press about the Siberian labor camps? In short, they wanted to know why the leaders in whom they had placed their trust had denied what the bourgeois press had been saying for years about the Soviet Union, only to have these reports corroborated by the belated admissions of the Soviet leadership itself.

Once such questioning of previously accepted tenets had begun, it was difficult to foresee how far the process might lead many party members. The more advanced dissenters hoped that the issues they had raised would be fully aired at the Easter 1956 Congress of the CPGB, but their hopes did not materialize, probably because many who were later to join the dissentient camp were, at this time, no more than vaguely uneasy and therefore susceptible to reassurance by specious arguments from the platform. The main speeches by General Secretary Harry Pollitt and other party leaders made no reference to the disturbing revelations at the Twentieth Congress, nor did any of the published resolutions. Instead, the topic was relegated to a private session, and although several delegates reportedly seized the occasion to voice critical opinions, the storm evidently subsided without shaking the aplomb of the leadership. A statement issued after the private session said innocuously:

> It [the private session] also heard a report by Harry Pollitt, the General Secretary, on the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.
>
> The Private Session received the report and expressed full confidence in the Soviet Union, its people, and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. It expressed its conviction that the great perspective for advance to communism as outlined in the whole policy of the Twentieth Congress will be fully realized.[2]

While the reassurances given at the Easter Congress may have calmed the uneasiness of some party members, there were not a few others whose discontent and determination to give expression to it were only deepened. In one city the protest took the form of a deliberate attempt by a secretly organized oppositionist faction to capture the area party leadership. The faction put forward its own nominees for election at the area party conference but was defeated through the panel system of voting.[3] The challenge was serious enough, however, to alarm the local leaders.

First Signs of Retreat

EFFORTS to check the mounting tide of dissatisfaction were made by Pollitt, writing in the party's weekly political journal, *World News* (April 21 and May 5), and to a lesser extent by R. Palme Dutt, editor of *Labour Monthly*, in its May issue. Yet neither went far enough. Pollitt attributed Stalin's "mistakes" to a "one-sided" interpretation of the theory of the increasing intensification of the class struggle after the attainment of power by the proletariat, and he sought to excuse the absence of any move from within the party to check Stalin's ruthless consolidation of his personal power during the 1930's on the ground that open criticism would have jeopardized national unity at a time when the USSR was gravely threatened by hostile capitalist states. He further admitted that "unfounded accusations" had been made against Yugoslavia at the time of its expulsion from the Cominform, but for this, he argued, only Beria was to blame.

Pollitt's explanation went on to appeal for continued support of the Soviet Union in the name of international working-class solidarity. Collective leadership and "socialist legality" had been restored in the CPSU, he alleged, and the British Communist Party need have no misgivings about giving its unqualified support. Criticisms of the USSR, he added, could always be left to the capitalist press.

Dutt was, perhaps, even less convincing. Like Pollitt, he was at pains to deny rumors of a crisis in the British party, attributing them to fabrications of the capitalist press. His remarks on the Stalin issue were brief and couched in the following evasive terms:

> That there should be spots on any sun would only startle an inveterate Mithra-worshiper. . . . To imagine that a great revolution can develop without a million cross-currents, hardships, injustices and excesses would be delusion fit only for ivory-tower dwellers in fairyland who have still to learn that the thorny path of human advance moves forward, not

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[2] *Resolutions and Proceedings of the Twenty-fourth National Congress of the Communist Party, 1956* (official CPGB brochure). London, April 1956.

[3] Under this system the leadership selects, from all nominations received, a panel of nominees which it recommends for election, thus exercising pressure on the "free choice" of the voters.

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only through unexampled heroism, but also with accompanying baseness, with tears and blood.

The end of this stage of the ferment within the party was marked by the announcement and resolution made public after the Executive Committee meeting of May 12-13. The announcement revealed that Pollitt was being released from the key post of General Secretary and promoted to the honorific one of party Chairman, the secretaryship to be filled by John Gollan, the party's National Organizer Pollitt had requested his release in a letter which gave ill health and age (he is 65) as the reasons for his action. These reasons may well have been quite genuine; at least, theories that the substitution was intended to assuage disaffection in the party are discounted by the fact that Gollan does not appear to have enjoyed any exceptional popularity among the discontented elements. The change was merely a switch from a Rakosi to a Geroe.

The Executive Committee resolution was more important. While it paid liberal homage to Stalin, it also expressed shock at having learned of the "grave injustices"—not merely mistakes—which were committed during his tenure of power, including the branding of "devoted patriots and Communists" as traitors. Party members were again told that the Soviet leaders had shown great courage in exposing these past abuses, that socialist legality was now safely re-established, and that the CPGB stood firm for the principle of working-class solidarity. (By now, the invocation of this principle was recognized by the dissentient faction as nothing more nor less than a euphemistic reaffirmation of uncritical support for all actions and theoretical dicta emanating from the Soviet Union, and it was one of the key points of difference between the dissidents and the Executive.)

In its latter portion, however, the resolution contained what may be construed as the party leadership's first real concessions. First, discussion was to be initiated on the problem of working in unity with the main body of the British labor movement. Second, the Executive would initiate discussion within the party on its basic program as first adopted in January 1951 and set forth in the pamphlet, *The British Road to Socialism*. The resolution acknowledged that the program, in its existing form, had shortcomings, including no clear outline of how, in the "people's democracy" of the future, democratic liberties and socialist legality would be guaranteed. A special commission was to be set up for the purpose of re-examining the program and receiving proposals for its revision, with the aim of drawing up a new draft for submission to the next biennial party congress in 1958. Third, the resolution established another special commission to examine the workings of "inner-party democracy"—a concession to criticisms charging a lack of democracy in the CPGB and largely inspired by the revelation of Stalin's arrogation of autocratic power.[4]

In accordance with the E. C. resolution, the columns of *World News* were opened in due course to discussion of these problems after a prefatory statement on each

[4] The most interesting feature of the work of the commissions was the presentation of a minority report signed by three of the fifteen members of the Commission on Inner-Party Democracy. This report was highly critical of the existing party organization and recommended sweeping changes. It was rejected by the Executive.

Pollitt: "And to think that I was once young enough to somersault with the best of 'em!"

Cartoon by Scott in the *Daily Sketch* (London), May 15, 1956. Permission to reproduce this cartoon must be obtained from the *Daily Sketch*.

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had first been published by a leading party personality. Both special commissions also began work, and their reports were published in January 1957. While the reports propose certain cautious policy modifications and improvements in procedures, neither contains any really radical departures.

New Stage of Party Crisis

FOLLOWING the initial concessions made in the May resolution of the Executive Committee, it appeared that the party leadership had weathered the worst of the storm, though not entirely without damage. In June, however, the publication by the U. S. State Department of the full text of the Khrushchev secret speech touched off a new stage in the crisis. The text actually told the dissidents in the party little that they did not know already from the earlier leakages in the "bourgeois" press, their resistance to such "reactionary" reports having weakened somewhat in the interim. Nevertheless, it provided them with strengthened evidence which the party leaders could not ignore, and by helping to convince waverers it again threw the whole affair sharply back into the controversial arena.

The Political Committee of the party reacted on June 21 by issuing a statement which disclosed for the first time that the private session of the Easter Party Congress had passed a resolution regretting the absence of a public statement by the CPSU regarding the secret Khrushchev speech. It again stressed the Soviet leaders' return to the principles of Leninism, but at the same time it went farther than any prior official statement of the party leadership in that it voiced agreement with the stand taken a few days earlier by the Italian Communist leader, Palmiro Togliatti, demanding "a profound Marxist analysis" of the "degeneration" of Soviet democracy and declaring that this degeneration could not be attributed solely to the character of one man.[5] The statement also recognized the need for a thorough discussion of the issues within the British Communist Party, although there was reason to suspect, as some dissident spokesman later charged, that the whole intention behind the statement was to disarm rather than encourage further analysis.

The Political Committee's support of the more radical position of Togliatti was, moreover, soon modified. On June 30 the CPSU Central Committee published a lengthy resolution in which, *inter alia,* Togliatti's views were strongly censured. At the same time three members of the CPGB Political Committee returned from consultations in Moscow, and shortly thereafter, on July 15, the party's Executive Committee issued a new statement fully endorsing the June 30 Soviet resolution.[6]

The July 15 statement, which came at the close of a two-day E.C. meeting, manifested quite obvious anxiousness to bury the Stalin issue once and for all. The discussions, said the statement, had now reached a stage where it was "especially important" to concentrate attention on the future policy and actions of the CPGB. The same point was underscored in a special box, set in heavy type, which appeared on the correspondence page of *World News* on July 21.

The party leaders' emphasis on this point was significant in conjunction with the Executive Committee's simultaneous decision to convoke a National Party Conference at the end of 1956. As it emerged later, the decision was the committee's response to demands put forward by fifteen party branches for the calling of a special congress. Many of them had advanced their petitions as early as May, but neither the fact that they had done so nor the names of the branches were published until July 28, when *World News* finally made the disclosure. Presumably the party leadership had feared that prior publication of these facts would invite additional pressure from other branches, but now that it had announced the projected party conference—seemingly on its own initiative—it hoped that such demands would subside. By holding a conference rather than a special congress, the leadership hoped to de-emphasize the importance of the proceedings and the extent of dissension in the party ranks.[7]

Organ for Dissent

IF anything, however, the Executive Committee's decisions of mid-July aggravated rather than calmed the troubled situation in the party. Criticism of the rigid orthodoxy of the party leadership became increasingly vocal, aided by the appearance in July of a new bi-monthly organ of dissentient opinion under the title of *The Reasoner.* Its editors were E. P. Thompson and John Saville, both well-known Communists and university teachers whose articles had often appeared

[5] Togliatti interview in Italian periodical, *Nuovi Argomenti,* No. 20, June 16, 1956 (republished in full as a special supplement by *World News.*) Political Committee statement of June 21 published in London *Daily Worker,* June 22, 1956.

[6] Published in London *Daily Worker,* July 16, 1956.

[7] There is also an important constitutional difference between the party congress and a national party conference: the former is legally (but not actually) the highest policy-determining body in the party, while the latter has no power whatever to decide policy. The Executive Committee is not constitutionally obligated to summon a special congress unless at least one-fifth of the party branches, numbering over 300, request it.

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in the Communist press. In May and June they both had sharply criticized the party leaders in writings published in *World News;* indeed, Thompson's article in the June 30 issue had been so outspoken in assailing the almost medieval scholasticism and stifling of discussion characteristic of Communist parties that the editors had taken the precaution of publishing alongside it a rebuttal by George Matthews, Assistant Secretary of the party. Matthews reasserted the rectitude of Communist orthodoxy in tediously familiar terms and denounced certain of Thompson's statements as "a libel on the party."

The purpose of *The Reasoner,* as announced by its editors, was to provide a forum for the more fundamental type of discussion which was not allowed free reign in the official party press. The general tone of its articles, while unwaveringly socialist, was strongly critical of the old orthodoxy, and most of the contributors managed to combine Marxist views with an intellectually liberal attitude. They included Hyman Levy, Ronald Meek, Doris Lessing and Derek Kartun—all well-known Communist writers—and the eminent socialist scholar, G. D. H. Cole. The Communist cartoonist "Gabriel", after quitting the *Daily Worker* over the Hungarian issue, began contributing his drawings.

From the outset the party leadership was hostile, but this did not prevent *The Reasoner* from scoring notable success. Despite the absence of any advance publicity—advertisements were barred from all party organs and were not inserted elsewhere—the first issue sold out within three weeks. This was certainly significant considering that the bulk of the readership was undoubtedly Communist.

In no position to take drastic disciplinary action, the party leadership confined itself for two months to expressions of "grave concern" and attempts, which were unsuccessful, to persuade the editors to cease publication. The Executive Committee, at a meeting on September 8-9, finally passed a resolution formally instructing Saville and Thompson to discontinue *The Reasoner,* and when they still refused to do so, the instructions were once more reiterated, in more emphatic terms, in a letter of October 16 under the signature of General Secretary Gollan.

The third issue of the review nonetheless made its appearance in November. The editorial article was angrily indignant over the Soviet intervention in Hungary, which the party leadership was supporting. The editors also protested vigorously against the Executive Committee's "instructions" to cease publication, which had been based on the ground that *The Reasoner* was not under the control of any elected body of the party. They pointed out that if this was a legitimate requirement, then the Committee should also have banned the *Labour Monthly.* The current line of this publication was, of course, one of the purest orthodoxy, but in 1928-29 its editor, R. Palme Dutt, had used the journal to advocate the newly-adopted Comintern line of all-out war on social democracy in opposition to the majority of the party Central Committee (predecessor of the Executive Committee). Of course, the fact that Dutt's stand coincided with that of Moscow may well explain why the Central Committee made no serious attempt at the time to suppress the *Labour Monthly.*

The November issue of *The Reasoner,* however, was its last. Indeed, this had already been announced in the preceding (September) issue, and the editors reiterated in the final number that three issues were all that had been planned in the journal's original form. They also expressed their intention of consulting with interested persons regarding the launching of a new socialist discussion journal on a permanent basis. Hence, *The Reasoner's* demise hardly could be claimed as a victory for the party leadership.

For their obstreperousness Saville and Thompson were finally punished by suspension from party membership for three months, a tacit confession that the party leaders still dared not resort to the weapon of outright expulsion, which they had not hestitated to wield in the past for much less reason.[8]

Impact of Hungary

SUSPENSION or expulsion, however, is no longer of concern to Saville and Thompson, for the party's official attitude in regard to Soviet action in Hungary led them, along with many other dissidents, to take the final decision to break with the party of their own volition. As Lenin said in a different context, they "voted with their feet."

Facing an unprecedented aggravation of the internal party crisis as a result of its approval of the ruthless Soviet action, the leadership sought to stem the tide by new concessions. At its meeting of November 10-11 (which ordered the suspension of Saville and Thompson), the Executive Committee decided to cancel the planned National Party Conference, already postponed until March 1957, and call in its stead a special congress for Easter 1957. On November 15, the Political Committee sought to rally the party's bewildered forces

[8] In 1921 the party expelled Sylvia Pankhurst for refusing to place her newspaper, *The Workers' Dreadnought,* under the control of the Central Committee.

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with an appeal which admitted that some members were resigning "in the present difficult situation."

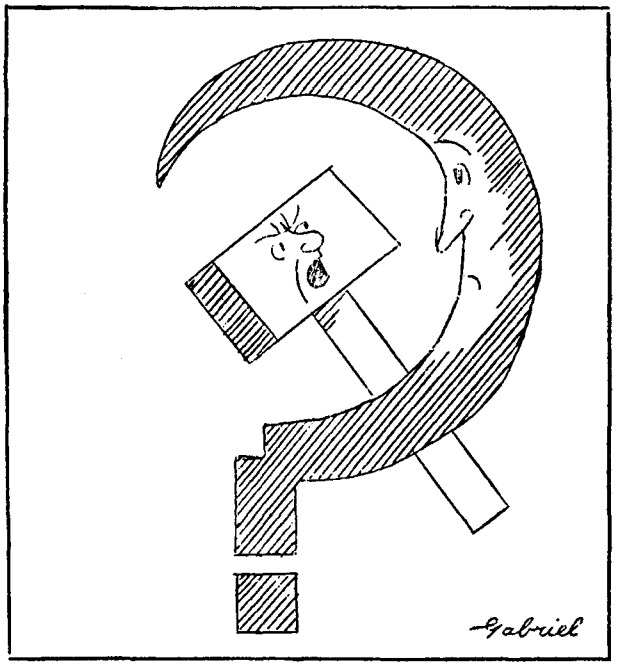
In addition to the flood of defections, which will be discussed further, the party faced other difficulties. In the course of the Hungarian crisis, nearly one-third of the journalistic staff of the *Daily Worker* quit the newspaper, among them its special correspondent in Hungary, Peter Fryer, whose reports presenting the revolution in a clearly sympathetic light were suppressed by the editors. (See p. 49 of this issue). *World News* has also shown signs of fretting under the party leaders' pro-Soviet line. On January 12 it gave full publicity to the report of a British Communist delegation which had visited the USSR to investigate the treatment of the Jewish population; the report was not entirely favorable and frankly admitted that an anti-Semitic policy had been pursued in the years 1948-52.[9]

While the exact extent of opposition within the party and the total number of defections over the Hungarian issue are difficult to estimate, some figures are available which provide a rough guide. On December 22, 1956, *World News* reported the result of votes that had been taken at a number of party branch meetings with respect to the Executive Committee's statement of November 4 announcing support of the Kadar government and of the Soviet intervention in Hungary. The combined results, as reported, were 3,582 supporting the Executive, 1,080 against, and 414 abstentions. It may be assumed that the voting was preceded by considerable lobbying on the part of reliable local party leaders, and also that many who would have voted with the opposition were not present because they had already defected.

There is also the evidence of membership renewals for 1957. On January 26 *World News* was able to report the re-registration of only 20,871 members, representing 64 percent of the 1956 membership, whereas 85 or 90 percent would have been more normal for this date. As a result, *World News,* in a departure from past practice, has been publishing weekly exhortations to the local party officials to push the renewal drive.

It would be untrue to say that opposition in the party and defections from it have been confined to any one class of members, but undoubtedly the intellectuals have been the leaven in the lump. This is partly explained by the fact that what precipitated the crisis was not any development in British industry, directly affecting the worker on the shop floor, but events quite external to Britain and of a nature which naturally prompted the intellectuals in the party to re-examine the whole basis of much that they had previously accepted as dogma. Moreover, the intellectuals are relatively more susceptible than the working-class members of the party to the attitudes and arguments of the non-Communists with whom they work and associate.

[9] The delegation's best-qualified member was Professor Hyman Levy, himself a Jew and prominent among the intellectual dissidents in the party. It also included J. R. Campbell, editor of the *Daily Worker.*



"And furthermore, I don't know why you take up this position regarding Democratic Centralism."

—From *The Reasoner* (London), November 1956.

This is not to say that the Communist wage-earner in Britain has been unmoved by the tragedy in Hungary; far from it. But he *was* relatively unmoved by the revelations of the secret Khrushchev speech, and it was these revelations that started the ferment in the CPGB—primarily an intellectual ferment. Indeed, for the Communist worker, less concerned than his intellectual comrades about the party's history and its implications, the Khrushchev speech may well have made life a little easier in one sense—it relieved him of the obligation to keep on repeating to his skeptical non-Communist workmates the naive falsifications of the past about Stalin and the Soviet Union.

Quo Vadis?

OF the intellectuals who have defected from the party in the past year, most retain their belief in socialism and—in various revised forms—Marxism. Many have gone over to the Labour Party, while

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others are experimenting with "Trotskyist" groups. At the same time they are tending to keep together in loose area groupings for purposes of discussion and consultation. One of these, calling itself the Nottingham Marxist Group, has recently published a pamphlet entitled, *Why We Left the Communist Party.*

The opening sentence of this pamphlet affirms that the members of the group had long entertained certain doubts about the Communist Party, but that, in effect, they had been able to rationalize the evils which they suspected until the Khrushchev speech. It is undoubtedly true that Communist intellectuals are prepared to go along in the party even though they have some limited reservations about party policy and theory. To push them to the point of revolt, a major explosion is necessary. Khrushchev provided it.

The Nottingham Marxist Group summarize their reasons for breaking with the party in three points:

1. The party leaders are no more than the agents of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
2. The anti-democratic nature of the party structure makes it impossible for the rank-and-file to influence its basic policies or change its leadership.
3. The party is a despised sect. It is despised not because it is loyal to the principles of socialism, but because it has betrayed them.

It is surprising that the group omitted, as a fourth reason, the fact that the Communist Party is hagridden with dogmas masquerading under the name of "scientific socialism." This is, without question, a state of affairs of which the intellectual elements of the party, in particular, have become painfully conscious.

The defections which received the greatest press publicity last November, however, were not so much those of intellectuals in the usual sense of the word as those of trade union leaders—Horner, Grahl and Keeley of the Fire Brigades Union, Cannon and Wallis of the Electricians, and Alex Moffat of the Lothian miners, to mention some of the better known. In general, their motives for leaving the party were not dissimilar to those of the intellectual defectors: for most of them Hungary was the last straw which impelled them to act after eight months of indecision.

But the trade union leaders have other important motivations which are not a factor among the intellectuals. The Communist trade unionist is usually a militant who finds a more encouraging milieu in the Communist Party than in the Labour Party. At times when the party becomes intensely unpopular, however, this consideration tends to be outweighed by a sense of isolation and of decreasing influence over the rank and file of the workers. It may be significant in this context that the Fire Brigades Union leaders, in announcing their defection, declared that the Labour Party now offers the only basis on which the unity of the labor movement can be built, and that the CP should be dissolved.

Two other motives have been advanced as possibly underlying the defections of some Communist trade union officials. While welcoming the defections, Jack Tanner, a former president of the Trade Unions Council, warned of the possibility that some of the defectors may have gone underground due to the party's extreme unpopularity. This, he asserted, had been done in the past with the aim of undermining the trade unions.[10] On the other hand, a writer with an intimate knowledge of the party has pointed to the fact that some trade union officials professed allegiance to the Communist Party solely because its machine enabled them to gain and hold their comfortable union positions; the crisis in the party, he suggests, prompted them to leave, not because of sincere ethical or political beliefs, but because the party could no longer further their union careers.[11]

* * *

Despite the many defections that have already taken place, the correspondence columns of the press and occasional circulars advertising meetings of Communist dissidents provide abundant evidence that many active malcontents still remain within the party.[12] Their hopes of achieving the kind of transformation which they desire to effect in the party doubtless are centered in the special party congress scheduled for Easter.

In the unlikely event that these hopes should be fulfilled, the British Communist Party could create an interesting problem for the British labor movement: one tends to think of the Independent Labour Party of the 1930's. Far more probable, however, in view of the fact that so many of the dissidents have already left the party, is a consolidation of the present leadership's position along whatever line may then constitute the current Communist orthodoxy. This may well be preceded by a due amount of breast-beating and, perhaps, the offer of a scapegoat. But barring further upheavals in the Soviet bloc, it is likely that the thinned ranks of the CPGB will be closed.

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[10] Reported in *The Times* (London), November 15, 1956.

[11] John Daniels, writing in *Labour Review,* a socialist journal launched in January 1957. Daniels is a university teacher who left the Communist Party in 1956.

[12] Especially interesting was a letter, signed by a number of Communist intellectuals, which appeared in *Tribune,* November 30, 1956, and *New Statesman and Nation,* December 1, 1956. It evoked warnings from the Executive and Political Committees and a denunciatory article by Assistant Secretary Matthews (*World News,* January 12, 1957).

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Economic Trends and Prospects

EDITORS' NOTE: Recent statements and resolutions emanating from Moscow have again brought into focus the manifold problems of the Soviet economic apparatus, and the difficulties in which Soviet planners find themselves in attempting to "reform" the system without changing its basic characteristics. While not new, the problems have become more acute not only with the expansion and modernization of the Soviet economy, but also with the general political relaxation that has taken place in the USSR since Stalin's death. How, for instance, can the Kremlin attempt to satisfy consumer needs while investing the largest share of the country's investments in heavy industry? How can centralized control be combined with the kind of flexibility that any rational economic system requires? How is it possible to improve labor productivity in agriculture while depriving the peasants of the product of their labor? These and other related questions are aired in Mr. Nove's "Problems of Economic Destalinization," while Mr. Grossman's article concentrates on the relationship between the attempted rationalization of the Soviet economic apparatus and the prospects for the political liberalization of the Soviet system *in toto*.

Problems of Economic Destalinization

By ALEXANDER NOVE

THERE is little doubt that the Soviet Union, despite the handicap imposed by heavy World War II losses of manpower and capital resources, has been carrying out its own industrial revolution at unprecedented speed. Experts have differed, and doubtless will continue to differ, in their measurement of the precise rate of industrial growth, but none denies that the pace has been extremely rapid and that some of the most impressive advances have been made since 1950.

The Soviet leaders have repeatedly declared it to be the overriding aim of their economic policy to carry on this process of maximum growth in order to "catch up with and overtake" the most advanced capitalist power, the United States, at the earliest possible date. They continue, by and large, to claim rapid progress, both in industry and in agriculture; yet there have also been admissions of difficulty in maintaining the planned tempo of advance. Thus, for example, the CPSU Central Committee, in its statement made public on December 25, 1956, spoke of overstrain and shortages, and called not only for a revision of the Sixth Five-Year Plan but also for the institution of important organizational changes.[1]

Just as the causes of the present difficulties go back to the Stalinist economic system, so the measures by which the Soviet leaders are endeavoring to overcome them form one of the many aspects of the whole process of destalinization. The central purpose of these measures is to bring the organizational structure and theoretical basis of the Soviet economy into line with the requirements of a modern industrial giant. For this, a new intellectual climate and, in particular, a change in the mentality and practice of Soviet economic administrators have become vitally necessary.

Stalinist "Contradictions"

THE Stalinist economic system assumed its essential form and character in the harsh early phases of industrialization and was further conditioned by the successive channelization of Soviet resources into military

Mr. Nove is a noted British authority on Soviet economic development and problems, and a frequent contributor to publications of high standing in this field.

[1] *Pravda*, December 25, 1956.

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preparedness, then into the waging of the war, and later into the postwar reconstruction of industry. The constant characteristic of economic policy in all of these stages was the ruthless enforcement of priorities in the pursuit of maximum growth and/or military power. The system, with all its waste and inefficiencies, scored important successes, but only at heavy cost. The sacrifices involved quite probably would not have been borne by the Soviet people had it been free to voice opposition; hence it is arguable that such rapid economic growth, or such speedy rebuilding of heavy industry after the extensive damage suffered in the war, was only possible under a tyranny of the Stalin type. On the other hand, the concentration on a few priority objectives entailed some distinctly undesirable economic consequences: it led inevitably to neglect of the non-priority sectors of the economy and hence to the extreme unevenness which has characterized Soviet economic development.

In order to work effectively, the Stalinist system of rigidly defined priorities required unquestioned authority at the top to resolve all conflicts involving these priorities, as well as an efficient terror apparatus to suppress popular pressures which might interfere with the dictatorial direction of economic policy. Even before Stalin's death, however, the over-centralized, hierarchical system of control was coming more and more into conflict with the increasing complexity of the Soviet economy. Organizational and a variety of other problems arose with which neither the inflexible administrative structure nor the state's obsequious economists could adequately cope.

The imbalanced development of the economy, and in particular the backwardness of agriculture, produced strains and stresses, while the over-simple priorities established by the dictatorship became increasingly inadequate as a guide to economic behavior. As long as Stalin was alive and the coercive apparatus remained effective, these troubles could be hidden from sight through rigorous censorship, or they could be dealt with by resorting to a mixture of arbitrary political decision and fixing the blame upon scapegoats.

The Search For Solutions

HOWEVER, Stalin's death released powerful pent-up forces, the immediate effects of which upon economic policy may be discerned by examining the actions of his successor, Malenkov, during his tenure of power in 1953-54. Malenkov's intent was quite clearly to relieve the pressures generated under the Stalinist system by granting a number of immediate concessions. An unusually large cut in retail prices was decreed, including a 50 percent reduction for potatoes and vegetables—obviously motivated more by demagogic than economic reasons. The virtually compulsory state loan levy was halved to the immediate benefit of wage-earners; and a sharp increase in state purchase prices for agricultural produce, coupled with a reduction of rural taxes, put more money into the pockets of the peasantry. These measures naturally brought powerful inflationary trends into play, and to meet them the Malenkov program called for a striking increase in investments in consumer goods industries, housing and agriculture. In 1954, the launching of the vast "virgin lands" campaign created a need for still more resources of all kinds.

Along with these moves, however, the 1953-54 period saw the continued rapid development of heavy industry and the maintenance of defense expenditures at very high levels. With the Soviet economy already at full stretch, one wonders how Malenkov expected it to cope with all these tasks simultaneously; yet he deliberately sought to relax the old scale of priorities so as to benefit consumer goods (for example, making all categories of freight equal for allotment of railway space) and at the same time to keep up the heavy industrial and defense efforts.

Malenkov's attempt to do the impossible was foredoomed to failure, and certainly was one of the primary causes of his downfall. After his resignation, Khrushchev restored the old priorities in favor of heavy industry, and investments in the consumer goods sector were scaled down. At the same time, retail price cuts were halted, or even reversed in some instances; and the compulsory loan levy was again doubled.

Despite this return to the basic lines of Stalinist economic policy, Malenkov's failure to meet all urgent economic demands at the same time forcibly drew the attention of the leadership to a basic problem of economics: the most rational allocation of scarce resources to competing ends. Needless to say, scarcity had also existed under Stalin, but then the problem had been resolved, not on a rational basis, but by dictatorial fiat which eliminated, so to speak, any effective competition between goals. But what Stalin could do, thanks to his untrammeled power, his successors, lacking it, cannot. Hence, while sharing Stalin's belief in the necessity of maximizing industrial growth through continued priority for heavy industry, they have found themselves under irresistible pressure to grant sizable concessions to public demand, especially for better food and housing. Khrushchev, since his initial reversal of Malenkov's "softer" economic policies, has been obliged to resume concessions in these areas and in still others—shorter hours, higher pensions, increased maternity leaves, re-

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laxation of restrictions on change of occupation, and still higher farm prices.

An important contributing factor to the leadership's economic difficulties was the fact that labor was becoming short, due partly to the effect of the war on the birth rate and partly to the government's own farm policies, which demanded more effort on the land. It was consequently more difficult to make up for errors in planning by taking on extra men, as had been the practice under Stalin. Thus, not only were the demands upon available resources becoming greater and more insistent, but the resources, especially labor, were becoming more scarce.

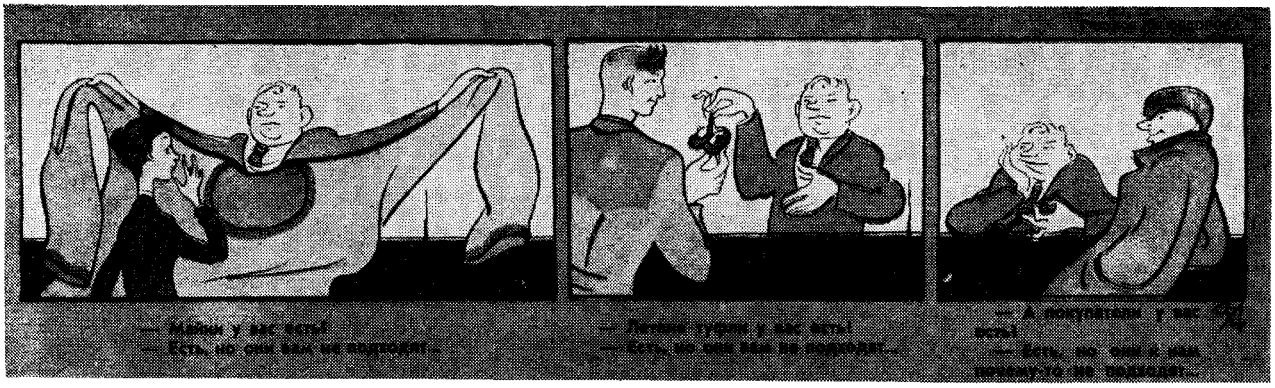
The situation obviously called for maximum efficiency, labor economy and new ideas. Stalinism, however, had taught obedience rather than enterprise; it had imposed an intellectual conformism which led, among economists as in other fields, to utter sterility of thought. The Khrushchev regime consequently found itself compelled to search more and more insistently for new forms of economic organization and to encourage thinking along new lines.

As part of this new approach, it was freely admitted that bureaucratic over-centralization constitutes a major obstacle to progress. Greater autonomy was granted to enterprises and collective farms, as well as to republic and local authorities concerned with economic matters. Yet, as the Central Committee statement of last December made clear, the problem of combining decentralization of decision with necessarily centralized planning is far from solved. This is due neither to stupidity nor bad will, but rather to more fundamental causes which are best illustrated by examining the practical problem of fixing criteria of decision for an "autonomous" director of a Soviet enterprise.

Some Pitfalls

IT should be borne in mind that Soviet policy continues to hinge upon an economic race with the West, and hence upon pushing all enterprises to maximize output. This being the case, and since under Soviet conditions industrial managers might well be inclined, unless prodded from above, to sit back and relax with comfortable profits, thus slowing the growth rate, it is absolutely essential that a superior authority fix output targets for enterprises and reward them for fulfillment of plans. This feature of the system, however, frequently comes into conflict with the aim of efficient production. The difficulty is particularly apparent wherever there is more than one variant of the basic product of an enterprise: the target must be fixed in terms of either weight, physical units or monetary value. If it is by weight, there is a direct incitement to the enterprise manager to concentrate on the heavier variants of his product and skimp on the light (*e.g.*, lightweight constructional steel), which means wastage of materials. If it is in physical units, quality tends to suffer; if in money value, the lower-priced variants are shunned—notoriously the case in the clothing industry.

All this serves to point up the serious obstacles which make it unlikely that decentralization will produce the results hoped for by the Soviet leadership. It will, in all probability, fail to assure production of the assortment of products desired by the central planners, with the result that there will be the temptation to return to "bureaucratic-centralist" intervention. Indeed, the latter phenomenon is already apparent in the area of collectivized agriculture, where systematic interference from above and the commission of stupidities by the controlling authorities continue to be reported in the Soviet



—Do you have any sweaters?
—Yes, but they don't become you. . .

—Do you have any sandals?
—Yes, but they don't become you. . .

—Are there any customers?
—Yes, but somehow they don't come to us.

—From *Krokodil* (Moscow), May 10, 1956.

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press a year after the collective farms were supposedly granted greater autonomy.

The official desire to encourage new inventions and new methods runs into similar difficulties. The investments required to do this commonly require the approval of higher authority, and the enterprise manager who seeks such approval has to reckon with the likelihood that he will be held responsible for failure, without much prospect of reward in the event of success. In addition, it seldom pays the manager to disclose, in this way, the possibility of achieving higher output or lower costs, for this entails the danger that the production plan will be adjusted accordingly. Far better to bid low, obtain a modest planned target, and reap the reward of caution in the form of over-fulfillment bonuses. Repeated official condemnations of such behavior cannot be effective so long as the system itself penalizes risk-taking and frequently rewards inaction.

Regional decentralization poses problems of its own. The official press speaks of "democratic centralism", of a proper balance between central planning and local economic autonomy. But what is the proper balance? It is all very well to write of "the most attentive and all-embracing consideration of local experience and local conditions, creating opportunity for maximum development of creative activity and initiative of the masses."[2] But the mere handing over of enterprises to immediate control of the ministries of the republics—which has been quite extensive—will not make any appreciable difference if these ministries continue to act merely as local agencies of the central authority in Moscow. In fact, the strengthening of the powers of the central planning-administrative organs which accompanied Pervukhin's appointment in December as chairman of the State Commission for Short-Term Planning of the National Economy tends to point, not toward greater, but toward less local economic autonomy.

Labor Shortage and Productivity

IN dealing with the related problems of labor and wages, the Soviet leadership faces further serious difficulties. At a time when the manpower supply is already short, the concessions which have been granted in respect of shorter hours and greater freedom to change employment tend to add to, rather than ease, the inflationary trend as enterprises bid against one another for workers. Major distortions and illogicalities in the wage structure add to the problem. The sharp reduction in the supply of forced labor also makes it harder to recruit for various pioneering projects, and the leaders themselves have professed awareness that appeals to youth provide no alternative long-term solution.

Faced with these difficulties, the Khrushchev leadership has undertaken a number of measures specifically designed to correct anomalies in the wage structure. As initial steps toward a complete overhaul, certain underpaid categories of unskilled labor have been given overdue pay increases; some ridiculously extreme incentive schemes have been moderated; and certain occupations have been transferred from a piecework to a time rate of pay. However, even where logical and necessary, the process of wage adjustment is bound to hurt many workers, and it is probable that this lies behind current reports of protests and sit-down strikes at certain factories. These disturbances may grow more widespread.

To combat the inflationary pressures, the government has also intensified its controls over the "wages fund" of enterprises, but here again the inflexible operation of central controls is bound to lead to inefficiency. An illustration is furnished by the report that one enterprise was unable to obtain authority to pay out a small additional sum in wages in order to renovate used wooden boxes for reuse, the reason being that such extra expenditures could only be authorized for additional production. The enterprise was then forced to spend much larger sums for new boxes, which was perfectly legitimate by the central standards because it fell in the category of "purchase of materials."

The latest population statistics only serve to underscore the gravity of the labor problem, for they show that the wartime drop in the birth and survival rates will continue seriously to reduce the intake of new labor over the next few years. The ambitious extension of secondary education is another restrictive factor, at least for the short run. Doubtless the decision to demobilize substantial numbers of troops was spurred by recognition that the men are more urgently needed to bolster the labor supply; but while the demobilization will certainly help, it cannot be expected to overcome the problem.

The labor shortage has inevitably focussed attention on means of increasing productivity, one evidence being a new interest in the obsolescence of capital equipment. Until two years ago Soviet economists denied that such a phenomenon could even occur in the USSR, that it was a form of waste peculiar to capitalism. Now it is acknowledged that the use of obsolete machinery may be unprofitable even in a socialist economy, and the earlier negative attitude is explicitly ascribed to the relative abundance of labor, which made it worthwhile to use any available machine which had not yet fallen to pieces.

The same needs have driven Soviet administrators and economists to new thoughts on the measurement of labor

[2] Leading article commenting on Central Committee statement of December 25, 1956, *Kommunist*, No. 18, 1956.

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productivity, on the principles which govern rational forms of mechanization, and on other problems not unknown to practical economists in other countries. The need for adequate guides to economic behavior is particularly acute in agriculture, where for many years the process of mechanization followed political rather than economically rational principles. Large tractors and combines were concentrated in the Machine Tractor Stations, but essential auxiliary processes remained quite primitive, resulting in conspicuous waste of labor. Collective farms also were handicapped in their efforts to minimize labor cost by inability to determine what the cost was. This handicap remains, and it must be evident that no rational decision about using labor-saving machinery is possible in agriculture—or anywhere else—unless the saving can be measured in terms of labor cost.

Efficiency vs. Deficiencies

THE search for greater efficiency has also brought into the limelight the most notorious weakness of the Soviet industrial structure: deficiencies in materials supply. Enterprises are unable to rely on an orderly flow of materials and components, which means either interruptions and consequent losses of production or that the enterprise must try to integrate by producing its own components, thus eliminating possible economies through specialization. Much managerial ingenuity is consumed in prodding the supply agencies, sometimes by means of "pushers" (*tolkachi*) and frequently by gifts of vodka and other forms of bribery. All this is now being admitted in Soviet publications, and the Central Committee's December statement stressed the importance of having adequate reserve supplies of materials at the factories in order to ensure an even flow of production. This marked a significant about-face from past official campaigns to reduce such reserves in order to "speed up the turnover of working capital."

An essential cause of supply troubles, however, lies in the fact that the government's production plans invariably have required more materials than can be made regularly available. For the first time, the Central Committee statement recognized this in acknowledging that the government's economic plans must be made less ambitious if materials shortages are to be overcome; indeed, the statement gave this as one of the main reasons for the revision of the sixth Five-year Plan.

But while less ambitious planning doubtless would improve the situation, the whole problem in the last analysis is related to price policy. Should prices of producers' goods reflect their relative scarcities so that, in effect, they would be "rationed by price"? Stalin's answer in his *Economic Problems of Socialism* was negative: the law of value, he held, does not apply to producers' goods. So far there has been no attempt to reformulate Stalin's dictum, but it is well known from Western experience that any commodity sold below the price at which demand and supply balance must be subjected to rationing, and that there is then a tendency for all would-be users to try and obtain the largest possible allocation. This both complicates the process of allocation and discourages the search for substitutes. Central allocation inevitably makes for inelasticity, discourages local initiative, and invites bureaucratic deformation; yet, despite all the recent fine words about smoother supply arrangements and decentralization, the basic question of revamping the price system has, as yet, hardly been discussed seriously, at any rate not in public.

The Challenge to Orthodoxy

ANOTHER aspect of the new Soviet search for production efficiency is the manifest tendency to turn away from the narrow chauvinism of the Stalin era and look to the West for new technological ideas, especially in the realm of labor economization. No longer is it claimed that Russians invented everything; and it is admitted that the old isolation did much harm. The reports of Soviet technical delegations returning from abroad—for example, the farm delegations to the United States and Great Britian—are being assiduously spread throughout the USSR. American economic example is frequently cited in technical journals, and even in Khrushchev's speeches; foreign technical articles are widely translated and reprinted.

Borrowed techniques will certainly strengthen the Soviet economy, but of themselves they cannot cure the deep-seated ills of the economic system. These ills are rooted in economic organization rather than techniques, and here, obviously, there is an absolute ideological barrier to transplantation. Hence, it is up to Soviet economists to devise new and better ways and instrumentalities for economic planning and administration within the framework of the Communist system.

The question arises, then, whether Soviet economists are equipped for the task. Their basic theory, Marxist "political economy," is almost totally irrelevant to real Soviet life, and the textbook on economics bearing the imprimatur of the Central Committee—the work of many eminent professors—is pure intellectual bankruptcy. Soviet economic teachings provide no guide to policy for the simple reason that all government decisions are postulated to be in conformity with the "laws" of socialism, and therefore correct by definition. Wages, the planned proportionate development of the economy, the "maximum" satisfaction of the needs of the people—

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all policy formulations are supposedly determined by these "laws." Such evasions obviously are not very helpful when the government becomes desirous of finding more efficient patterns of economic behavior, and the economists have consequently been made the butt of some vigorous criticism. Thus, a writer in *Voprosy Ekonomiki* (Problems of Economics), No. 10, 1955, complained:

. . . for years there has not been a single worthwhile general theoretical work. . . . Not a single work has been published which examines in what ways the objective character of [economic] laws finds expression, how the requirements of any of these laws are put into effect, and how breaches of these laws can be identified.

As a result of such criticisms, and also of the greater frankness of official statements, wider availability of statistics, and the initiation of professional discussions on practical economic problems, the economists have at last awakened from their lethargy, and many relevant questions are now being genuinely and openly aired. However, the discussions still remain within the admissible (if somewhat broadened) limits of orthodoxy. None of the many articles published in the past year on the economy of collective farms, for example, has dared to suggest that the farms and Machine Tractor Stations be merged, although the articles themselves cited abundant evidences of the inefficiency caused by their separate existence. Nonetheless, reading current Soviet economic periodicals is refreshing after the dull sterility of these organs in the last years of Stalin. If there is a failure to put forward any original and drastic solutions, it is doubtless due as much to an understandable reluctance to suggest remedies which cannot be implemented without major political decisions as it is to intellectual shortcomings on the part of Soviet economists.

The Limits of the System

THIS points to what is, perhaps, the most fundamental difficulty of all. Soviet economists may well suffer from timidity and intellectual narrowness of outlook, but they could hardly be otherwise in a system designed, in its entirety, to operate in a framework of arbitrary authoritarian decision and devoted, without regard for normal economic reasoning, to the expansion of heavy industry and military power. Not only the economists, but Soviet officials and managers at all levels, became accustomed under Stalin to act upon orders from above rather than to think for themselves. The system worked as long as the coercive apparatus of the state was capable of suppressing protests; now, though the coercive power is weakened, the basic framework of the system remains unchanged. Stalin's successors seemingly recognize the need for drastic changes if economic efficiency is to be achieved; yet so much are they the products of the system that they are mentally unprepared to venture beyond its limits.

The Soviet leaders, for example, seem genuinely concerned over the failure of industry and trade to meet consumer requirements, and over the unresponsiveness of the local authorities to the demands and aspirations of the people they administer. One solution of the first problem would be to permit the profit motive to operate, if only on a small scale, so that enterprise would be encouraged to meet consumer needs, without the necessity of obtaining official authorization. As for the second, the local authorities could easily be made more responsive by instituting genuine elections to the local Soviets. Obviously, however, it is not likely that Khrushchev and his colleagues are disposed even to consider such un-Marxist solutions.

Pressures from Below?

CONCERNED as they undoubtedly are over the economic difficulties which confront them, the Soviet leaders are studiously seeking to avoid giving the impression that the USSR is dropping behind in the economic race. Thus, *Pravda* declared on January 12, 1957:

Hostile bourgeois propaganda is endeavoring to interpret the decisions of the Plenum [of the Central Committee, in December] as reflecting some kind of special difficulties, as a retreat from previously-decided rapid tempos of industrial expansion. Such assertions of bourgeois propaganda are nothing but slander. The point is not any such retreat, but a movement to a higher level of economic development, in which a rapid growth rate is made possible not only, or so much, by big new investments, but rather by better use of existing production possibilities, by a more rational organization of the job corresponding to the present stage in the building of communism.

While this may be accepted as a statement of intention, it is difficult to believe that the ambitious targets of the sixth Five-Year Plan will be achieved with reduced investments and in spite of the labor shortage and the appreciable additional strain which must be imposed upon the economy as a result of changed relations with the satellites. The *Pravda* article seems to be arguing that the elimination of overstrain will result in greater efficiency, so that the original production goals can still be reached, and even surpassed. On the face of it, this appears self-contradictory, for how can the plans be reduced to avoid overstrain, and then so much be gained that the reduction will be nullified and the plans fulfilled after all? But it is not so silly as all that: *Pravda* argues that resources, notably in the building industry, are in fact im-

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mobilized by trying to do more than can be completed with the available supply of materials. The aim is to make capital more productive, to generate more output with a smaller volume of capital investments.

It is certainly true that Soviet investment programs have always tended to outrun the materials available; indeed, the Finance Minister criticized this failing in almost every budget speech since the war, to no avail. Still, the Soviet leaders are quite clearly overestimating what can be accomplished by their belated action toward better coordination. It may succeed in eliminating strains in the building industry, but only at the cost of underfulfilling the overall industrial output targets of the sixth Five-Year Plan.

Thus, it seems evident that the Soviet leadership faces a formidable array of problems and difficulties in pursuing its grand objective of overtaking the United States in economic strength. Various of the key factors tending to slow down the rate of Soviet economic growth have been examined, and there are still others—such as the need to allot a steadily increasing proportion of total investments to replacement of obsolete capital equipment—which cannot be analyzed in this limited space.

One general point must be mentioned, however, as it is of fundamental political and economic importance: that is, the growing pressure upon the Soviet leaders to divert resources to sectors which do not contribute to industrial growth. Thus, they have been obliged to undertake a large and continuing investment commitment in agriculture, which has significantly improved output in recent years and at the same time brought a sizable increase in peasant purchasing power. This increased demand, added to those of the urban population, has in turn created an urgent need for more consumer goods, and hence heightened inflationary pressure. There is also a great deal of public discontent with the housing situation.

While the government can repeat *ad nauseam* the usual catch-phrases about priority for heavy industry, it cannot, in its actions, ignore these pressures. In the past, housing plans generally were under-fullfilled whenever a strain or shortage developed, but now it is asserted that housing plans will be expanded and that no lagging behind in fulfillment will be tolerated. The citizen will of course benefit, but probably at the expense of the industrial growth rate which achieved its high level of the past largely because of the government's neglect of such sectors as housing, agriculture, textiles, and retail distribution. Now, indications are that the regime is no longer finding it politically feasible to ignore the consumer.

This new sensitivity to public opinion, which may have grown since the shocks of Poland and Hungary, therefore must be regarded as an important retarding curb upon the industrial growth rate, though one the extent and potentialities of which must remain a matter for speculation. A clue may be afforded by the extent to which the sixth Five-Year Plan is, in fact, being amended, but no information is yet available at this time of writing.

* * *

THE Soviet economy is under strain, and certain defects from which it suffers may prove incurable. However, even allowing for a considerable slow-down in the rate of growth and for failure to reach the prescribed goals for 1960, the Soviet economy will still be expanding rapidly. It is capable, even within the existing framework, of achieving considerably greater efficiency. Soviet heavy industry is already on a high level and the output of machinery and steel is still rising at a fast pace, so that there may well be a growing store of capital goods which the Soviet leadership, without too much sacrifice of industrial expansion at home, can use to supplement credits and technical aid to the economically emergent areas which the USSR seeks to bring within its sphere of influence. Productivity of labor in the capital goods industries is relatively high compared to that in the other industrial sectors; wages are low in relation to those in competing Western countries; and raw materials are comparatively cheap. All this means that, in the particular sector which furnishes the sinews of the Soviet international economic offensive, the USSR is capable of competing in world markets without resort to other than orthodox trading principles, and with economic profit to itself.

In many sectors of Soviet industry, of course, the standards of management and the skill of the labor force are low, in some cases extremely low, which reflects the fact that there has been deliberate concentration of the best personnel in the priority heavy industries. But there is little doubt that the considerable effort being made to improve and expand scientific and technical education must eventually make skill and technological ability less scarce than at present.

Thus, it certainly would be illusory and dangerous to view the Soviet economy as tottering on the brink of disaster; it is far from that. It nonetheless is quite evident that the problems and contradictions confronting the Soviet leaders and economic planners are profound and complex. Indeed, some of them are inherent in the Communist economic system itself, which is to say that they may prove insoluble by a leadership unwilling to depart from ideological and organizational orthodoxy.

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Economic Rationalism and Political "Thaw"

By GREGORY GROSSMAN

FEW will deny that the Soviet political climate has changed perceptibly since Stalin's death.[1] We have witnessed variable breezes of liberalization at home, stormy gusts of contumacy and rebellion in the satellites, alternate sunshine and clouds on the international horizon. The new weather brought trials as well as blessings to the Soviet economy; yet it would be incorrect to say that all of its current problems are primarily or proximately due to recent political events. In many cases the thaws of the post-Stalin era merely bared what had been mounting for years under the ice-pack of repression and secrecy. The old ways of running the economy, now deeply ingrained, have turned into fetters on Soviet economic progress. Extreme centralization of planning and decision-making, minimization of the role of the market, suppression of the peasantry, discrimination against the consumer, large-scale forced labor, a hectic pace imposed on all from above—they fitted well into the political climate of Stalinism, and indeed were part and parcel of it. To a large extent these ways still persist, as do their inevitable concomitants: overbureaucratization of all areas of work; avoidance of responsibility, and hence of initiative, by the individual; disregard for quality and cost; preference for the familiar routine; low productivity in agriculture; a yearning for the "quiet life" throughout.[2]

The Soviet economy has of course developed since Stalin's death. The rate of technological advance continues to be rapid. But the levels of economic activity in the West have been rising at the same time, so that the regime's goal of surpassing the West has been constantly moving out of grasp, if not (historically speaking) out of reach. Mindful of this problem and spurred by its self-imposed rivalry with the West, the leadership has shown some willingness to tinker with the economic and institutional machinery of the Soviet system, while resisting any radical re-design of the social model.

The tinkering started almost the day Stalin died and has been proceeding in four main directions along the economic front: (1) reduction of pressure on the individual and increased welfare measures for the population (2) decentralization of functions in administration and planning; (3) enhancement of economic rationality; and, (4) various efforts to solve the problem of a badly lagging agriculture. Cutting across all four has been a determined and reinvigorated effort to absorb and apply modern technology, and to raise the productivity of labor. Advance in each of these directions has its political and ideological corollaries, such as diminution of police terror, relaxation of totalitarian controls, or the spread of rationality to other areas of social life. Conversely, such advance may be contained by political considerations, *e.g.*, the preservation of power by the ruling group, or by the dictates of an inflexible ideology.

Reduction of Pressure on the Individual

ONE of the most resented features of the Stalinist era was the intense and constant pressure on the individual to do his utmost for "socialist construction", to accept (at least outwardly) the prescribed norms of behavior, and to suppress his individuality and true feelings.[3] The instruments of pressure were of course incessant propaganda on the one hand, and fear engendered through police terror on the other. Stalin's and Beria's successors have appreciably relieved this pressure. The all-pervading secret police has been put under some restraint, arbitrary arrests and convictions are not as common as they were, several broad amnesties were

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[1] The author wishes to acknowledge the assistance of the Russian Research Center, Harvard University, where he has recently had the benefit of a temporary Research Fellowship.

[2] Interesting discussion of the organizational and institutional problems facing the Soviet economy at this juncture may be found in the following: Robert W. Campbell, "Some Recent Changes in Soviet Economic Policy," *World Politics*, Vol. 9, No. 1 (October, 1956), pp. 1-14; R. W. Davies, "Economic Aspects of the XX Congress," *Soviet Studies* (Glasgow), Vol. 8, No. 2 (October, 1956) pp. 172-184.

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[3] *Cf.* Raymond A. Bauer, Alex Inkeles, and Clyde Kluckhohn, *How the Soviet System Works* (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1956), *passim.*

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promulgated, thanks to which the forced labor camps have lost in population.

Similarly, some of the pressure has been lifted on the economic front. Hours of office work were regularized; maternity leaves were extended; the harsh labor laws of 1940 were in part abrogated;[4] the work week was shortened by two hours in 1956, and, in his report to the Twentieth Party Congress in February 1956, Khrushchev promised to bring it gradually down from 48 to 40-42 hours per week by 1960.[5] These steps have been supplemented by welfare measures of various sorts, such as increases in pensions, abolition of tuition fees in high schools and higher educational institutions, increases in peasant incomes, raises for the lowest-paid wage earners, and so forth.

There is, however, a conspicuous and significant exception to this trend of relaxation of direct pressure on the individual. The exception is agriculture, where the obligatory minimum labor contribution by the peasants to the collective farm was sharply raised in 1954, and the threat of confiscation of the private plot for those delinquent in this regard was introduced in the spring of 1956.[6]

From the point of view of productive efficiency alone, and even disregarding human feelings, there is little doubt that the pressure on the individual was carried too far. It frayed nerves, dulled senses, fatigued muscles, brought people prematurely to the grave, and evoked pernicious defensive mechanisms. It must have in large measure defeated its own purpose, and its relaxation in recent years has most likely had beneficial effects on productivity as well as morale.

The intriguing question, however, is: how far can and will the regime carry the relaxation of pressure on the individual? Might it not feel that, carried beyond a certain point, political relaxation breeds economic laxity? The democratic societies, of course, do pay a considerable economic price for individual freedom, and generally deem the result well worth the cost. For reasons to be mentioned, in the contemporary Soviet society this price may be higher yet. Even if they should be willing to grant a larger measure of freedom for other reasons—a big "if"—would the Soviet rulers be ready to bear the economic cost?

Historically speaking, much of the Soviet labor force is young at its job. It remains yet to be determined to what extent it has acquired the responsibilities and attitudes that are characteristic of the more mature and freer industrial societies. How developed are the professional values of Soviet management; how high is the pride of workmanship of the rank and file? The pressures of the Stalin era implanted inertia and cynicism along with industrial discipline: in what proportion will these ingredients remain if the element of fear is sharply reduced? The regime would be asking these and similar questions not in a vacuum, but within the actual context of the Soviet economy, that is to say, within the context of a "command economy" (*Befehlswirtschaft*) where actions are planned and regulated in nearly all their minutiae by orders from above. Here, for better or worse, the dictates of the market are frequently contravened, and the self-interest of the producing unit is often suppressed. It is precisely in such an economy that civic maturity and responsibility are crucial for the success of the system within a democratic context. Those not overly committed to democratic values are more likely to succumb to the temptation to bolster the performance of the "command economy" by limiting any tendencies toward democratization.

It may be retorted that the Soviet economy has all along been relying on monetary incentives to the individual, as well as on pressure and fear, in order to elicit compliance with orders from above. This is true but can be answered in two ways. First, monetary incentives in the Soviet "command economy" have been effective primarily in raising the quantity of production. They have been quite ineffective in raising quality, improving methods, cutting costs, eliminating hoarding of materials and labor, serving the consumer, and with regard to many other important aspects of economic performance. Secondly, the monetary incentives themselves may lose in effectiveness if pressure from above is relaxed enough to loosen the controls which even now hold back inflationary tendencies only with difficulty.

Attempts to Raise Agricultural Production

OF special importance in this connection will be the progress in attempts to increase agricultural production. It is in this sector, as we have seen, that the major exception to the post-Stalin trend toward relaxation of pressure lies, and understandably so, for it is here that material incentives have been least adequate and least effective. It must be noted also that spectacular as Khrushchev's plans for solving the agricultural prob-

[4] Their enforcement was lax even before Stalin died. See Jerzy Gliksman, "Recent Trends in Soviet Labor Policy," *Problems of Communism,* No. 4 (July-August), 1956.

[5] The regime probably chose to proclaim the "dividend" to the population in the form of leisure rather than in the form of an additional increment of consumers' goods or housing simply because it was more in its power to do so. However, some of the increased leisure may be offset by more overtime work, presumably at overtime wages.

[6] *Kommunist,* 1954, No. 15, p. 66; *Pravda,* March 10, 1956.

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lem have been—the "virgin lands" campaign with its large-scale population movement, the corn-growing program, monetary concessions to the peasants—they could as well have been undertaken by Stalin had he been willing to admit his prior failure on this front. Certainly the two recent repressive measures mentioned above—increase in the labor-day minimum, and threatened confiscation of private plots—bear the typical Stalinist imprint. It is further significant that Khrushchev's most radical institutional reform in agriculture, the decree instructing the collective farms to do their own planting, has remained a dead letter so far.[7]

WHILE THE DECISION WAS BEING TAKEN

Above: Well done, Petya, a fine idea . . .

Below: . . . but unfortunately, it's outdated.

(Paper reads "Rationalizer's proposal).

—From *Krokodil* (Moscow), November 20, 1956.

Should progress in agriculture continue to be slow, especially in relation to the rising requirements—the high grain and milk deliveries in 1956 are largely a result of fortuitous meteorological conditions of the past two years—we can hardly expect a more liberal policy toward the peasants. This in turn is likely to set limits to liberalization in the country at large. Let us recall that in the early years of Soviet industrialization repression against the peasantry led the march of mass terror against the population.

Paradoxically, the development within Yugoslavia and Poland of independent internal economic and foreign-trade policies, and the possibility that the satellite countries will follow the Tito-Gomulka model (as well as the recent revolution in Hungary), may inhibit possible trends toward liberalization within the USSR. This is so not only because of any possible direct political reaction by the Soviet regime, but also because of the probable impact on the Soviet economy. The various "new courses" in the satellite states will most likely result in the near future in diminishing their marketable supplies of agricultural products and in reducing their exports of consumers' goods, the latter heretofore going largely to the USSR. Already shipping considerable amounts of grain to Eastern Europe, and having agreed in the wake of recent events to ship more, the Soviet Union may thus be faced with increased demands on its own agriculture. These demands will increase further should the large imports of sugar, textiles, and leather goods from the satellite area be curtailed. It follows therefore that the greater pressure on agriculture will not be conducive to any further relaxation of political controls at home. Finally, should the strain of political ties within the Communist empire prompt the Soviet Union to spur the rate of development of its own heavy industry, as it well may, the chances of internal political liberalization may suffer further.

Decentralization of Administration and Planning

EVER since Stalin's death his successors have been tinkering with the organizational structure of the Soviet economy, mostly in an attempt to decentralize administration and planning, and to reduce the hyper-

[7] *Pravda,* March 11, 1955. I have discussed this and other aspects of "Soviet Agriculture Since Stalin" in *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science,* Vol. 303 (January, 1956), pp. 62-74; see also Lazar Volin, "Soviet Agricultural Policy After Stalin: Results and Prospects", *Journal of Farm Economics,* Vol. 38, No. 2 (May, 1956), pp. 274-286.

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trophied clerical staffs and paper work.[8] It is easy, however, to exaggerate the significance of these moves. The increase in the powers of factory managers still leaves them with hardly any real decision-making authority by Western standards, and is more an indication of the extremely restrictive situation that obtained prior to the decrees of May 14 and August 9, 1955, than of any new freedom.

The limited departmental and geographic decentralization of planning and administration carried out so far is of marginal significance from an economic point of view. While alleviating somewhat the cumbersomeness of the bureaucratic machine, it raises new problems of co-ordination and control. That these reorganizations have not been effective is evident from the text and tone of two resolutions of the Central Committee of the CPSU on planning and economic administration published at the end of 1956, which attest to the fact that the allocation and distribution of materials remains very inefficient, and that planning continues to be tardy,[9] This latest move is ambivalent on the question of decentralization: while urging a further transfer of decision-making to the various ministries and republics, it charges the State Economic Committee, a planning body when established in 1955, with current managerial and allocative functions. It seems as though the State Economic Committee is to become a super-ministry.

The political implications of these efforts toward decentralization seem to be even more limited than the economic, for there is no evidence that political power as such is being dispersed thereby. Certainly the party is not being decentralized.

Indeed, before decentralization can be successful even on the economic plane, a substantial change in attitude toward economics has to take place. If decision-making is to be dispersed, and if it is to serve the interests of the national economy, then the people on the spot, from the ministries down to the factories and farms, must possess the necessary information (chiefly prices and costs), that information must be meaningful from the national-economic point of view, and there must be definite rules as to its use in making decisions. There are many areas of the Soviet economy where this is not yet the case, although efforts are being made on a broad front to grapple with the problem. Only if this problem is largely solved can the decentralization of economic administration and planning ultimately succeed.

[8] See, for example, my "In the Land of Paper Pyramids," *Problems of Communism,* No. 4 (July-August), 1955, and Campbell, *op cit.,* pp. 2-7. The most important step perhaps was the transfer of many enterprises, chiefly in light industry, to the jurisdiction of the several republics, but with centralized planning and control preserved (*Pravda,* June 3, 1956).

[9] *Pravda,* December 25, 1956.

The Trend Toward Economic Rationality

IN recent years there has been a multiplicity of developments in Soviet economics, some of them of an abstruse nature (and many of them little noticed and correlated by foreign observers), whose common denominator is the extension of the area of economic calculation and of orderly decision-making based on such calculation. This trend toward "economic rationality", though not spectacular of itself, is of great significance for the evolution of Soviet economic institutions.

It is not always realized how delinquent the Soviet economy has been in this respect. Agriculture has been the main sinner: for example, it is nearly impossible to compare the relative cost (not to say profitability) of growing the same product on two different collective farms, or of deciding on cost grounds what to grow on a given farm. But other sectors of the economy are not free from these difficulties either. For instance, there is still no accepted methodology of comparing capital outlay with current expenditure in the planning of investment projects, and hence no standard way of determining how capital-intensive the projects should be.

The recent developments cannot be described here in detail. They comprise such steps as the introduction of business calculation (*khozraschet*) where it has not been hitherto applied (*e.g.,* on the machine-tractor stations); elimination of subsidies (*e.g.,* on state farms); and extensions of profit incentives (*e.g.,* in construction). Measures still under discussion are: introduction of cost calculations in the collective farm sector; and rules for the determination of the capital-intensity of projects and for the replacement of obsolete equipment. Still more fundamental questions, such as that of the rationality of the price system in agriculture and elsewhere, have been raised and are presumably under discussion. So far, the actual progress along these lines has been limited, but the general tendency toward economic rationality (in the sense indicated) is quite clear. Needless to say, this tendency accords with the broader trend toward greater rationality in social affairs that some observers of the Soviet scene have been discerning since 1953. It indicates, among other things, some readiness to subordinate or adapt the dogmas of a totalitarian ideology to the dictates of economic efficiency.

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The implications of a continued trend toward economic rationality (in the narrower sense) may well transcend its immediate sphere of application. As we

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have seen, significant and successful decentralization of the economy (without losing its socialist character) is predicated on greater possibility and use of economic calculation, and of clear-cut rules to accompany it. Furthermore, by diminishing the area of conjecture facing managerial personnel, by contracting the scope of administrative fiat and bureaucratic arbitrariness, by narrowing the gap between the interests of the economic unit and those of the state, by reinforcing the broader tendencies toward technical rationalism—in these and other ways the spread of economic rationality may reduce the need, and hence possibly also the exercise, of that constant pressure on the individual from above which still prevails, though in diminished measure. And without a considerable lessening of this pressure in the economic sphere it is difficult to visualize any important further liberalization in the domestic political realm.

It must be stressed that economic rationality is only permissive, not causal, in its beneficial effects on political liberalization. A rational price system is congruous with forced labor camps (though it may work better without them); indeed, the two will co-exist where efficiency is exalted and human values are denied. The degree of commitment to human values by those in authority is still the crucial question for the prospect of political liberalization within the Soviet Union.

NEW SOVIET DECENTRALIZATION MOVE

Fresh evidence of the continuing Soviet search for economic solutions has been given by a decree of the Plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU, published in Moscow on February 16, 1957. The decree discloses that the Soviet leadership is considering new, potentially far-reaching steps toward decentralization of the industrial management system, the change reportedly (interview by J. Alsop with Soviet planning officials, reported in *New York Herald Tribune,* February 21, 1957) involving abolition of the existing industrial ministries in Moscow and their replacement by regional economic boards under the guidance of the central planning agencies.

The prefatory statement to the decree makes it clear that the regime finds the present mechanism for planning and managing industrial production inadequate: The central ministries continue to adhere to a "departmental approach" to major problems, which "weakens and disrupts normal local connections among enterprises of different ministries located in a given economic area." Since all decisions have to be referred to the ministries, moreover, it becomes impossible to solve economic problems on the spot, to utilize all available local resources in material, manpower and finance, or to correct local operating failures in the execution of the state plan.

The decree indicates that, to correct these defects, the Soviet leaders are now leaning toward new organizational forms based on the regional interrelation of industrial enterprises, rather than toward any further subdivision or revamping of the present central mechanism. They evidently are strongly attracted to some form of decentralization of industrial management authority, feeling that steps in this direction hold forth the best promise of large-scale specialization and cooperation in production and of a balanced development of the economy—both prime objectives of current Soviet economic policy. They seemingly are aware, also, that the "decentralization" reforms of the past few years were little more that formal gestures: the union republics were allowed to establish their own industrial ministries, but only to serve as transmission agencies for relaying Moscow directives to the industrial plants located in their respective areas.

The measures contemplated by the Central Committee Plenum appear to envisage something more than nominal decentralization of this kind, but at the same time it is apparent from the decree that the Soviet leaders remain conscious of the risks to which the entire structure of centralized control will be exposed by a genuine move to allow the local authorities to exercise the degree and kind of industrial autonomy necessary to make the operation of enterprises under their jurisdiction economically rational and responsive to local needs and opportunities. This awareness is reflected, first, in the unusual stipulation that detailed consideration of the Plenum's proposals for reform shall be entrusted to the highest organ of Soviet political authority, the eleven-member Presidium of the CPSU Central Committee. The Presidium, working jointly with the government Council of Ministers, is to prepare concrete measures for the reorganization of industrial management with a view to bringing it closer to the regional level of operations. The need for caution is further underlined by the stipulation that the Presidium shall try to harmonize the regional approach with "the strict observance of the principle of centralized planning on a national scale."

The task of the Presidium, under these terms of reference, is clearly not a simple one. Its assignment, in short, amounts to attempting to find a way out of the inherent contradiction between the need to maintain local economic health and the regime's ambition to press forward along the line of expanding a selected group of industries considered vital to the national power position of the USSR.

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The Soviet Impact on Central Asia

By RICHARD E. PIPES

TODAY Soviet expansionism—stopped in the West by the strength of the NATO countries and in the East by the emergence of a number of independent, highly nationalistic states—focuses to an ever-increasing extent on the Middle East. In an attempt to exploit the transcendent issue of nationalism in that area, Moscow has laid great stress in its propaganda on slogans of "anti-imperialism" and "anti-colonialism", and has professed adherence to the principle of national independence for the Middle Eastern peoples. In light of this calculated appeal, it is instructive to study the Soviet Union's own experience in administering a Middle Eastern territory. For in Central Asia the Communist regime has had to grapple for several decades with a set of problems not unlike those which have confronted the Western colonial powers. Close analysis reveals that Moscow's record of dealing with these problems is not better and in some respects is far worse than that of the Western powers — despite such "advantageous" factors as its complete lack of moral inhibitions and the existence of a continuous land frontier between metropolis and colony.

The Terrain

SOVIET Central Asia, consists, broadly speaking, of two distinct regions: the northern, comprised largely of the Kazakh Republic, and the southern, once known as Turkestan, and now divided into the four Soviet republics of Kirgizia, Uzbekistan, Tadjikistan, and Turkmenistan. The northern region is partly prairie (steppe), partly desert, while the southern is largely desert and mountains, bisected by several major river valleys along which the bulk of the population is concentrated. The indigenous population of both these areas is wholly Muslim (with very minor exceptions, such as the Bukharin Jews), and predominantly Turkic. But there are considerable differences between the natives of the prairie and desert, who until recently pursued nomadic habits and continued to adhere loyally to the original Turkic way of life, and the urban and agricultural natives, who had mixed considerably with Iranians and Arabs and evolved in consequence a more typically Middle Eastern, Islamic civilization. The traditional economic pursuits of these groups are animal husbandry in the prairie and desert, and agriculture, trade, and handicrafts in the remaining areas.[1]

The Kazakh steppe, populated by numerous separate tribes of primitive nomads, never developed any significant, stable civilization. But Turkestan, which lay across the principal commercial routes between East and West, attained in the Middle Ages a well-developed urban culture, and its religious schools, notably those at Bukhara, played an outstanding role in the life of Islam. The Golden Age of Turkestan came to an end in the early sixteenth century as a result of constant invasions of nomads from the prairie, and the discovery of maritime routes to the East, which gradually choked off the caravan trade. Turkestan petrified, and until the middle of the nineteenth century remained one of the most isolated areas in the world, a curious relic of medieval Islam, which under pain of death prohibited all Christians from crossing its frontier.

Russian Colonization: Tsarist and Soviet

THE Russians acquired Central Asia by a combination of peaceful penetration and military conquest. The prairie regions came under Russian dominion in

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[1] Strictly speaking, the term Central Asia *(Srednaia Aziia)* applies only to Turkestan, but this usage is due to the historical accident rather than to any geographic cause—namely to the fact that after its conquest the Kazakh prairie was for a long time administered as part of the Siberian province. Otherwise, there is every reason to regard the two regions as an entity. The western and southern fringes of this territory lie in China and Afghanistan.

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the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, while Turkestan was subjugated in a series of rapid and relatively cheap campaigns from 1868-73, climaxing in the expedition against the Turkmens in 1881. The Tsarist regime was not particularly interested in the internal life of the Muslim community, being content to exploit Turkestani cotton and to see to it that the British did not set foot in this vast and strategically located area. The impact of Russian rule on the native population was almost entirely indirect: it brought distinct economic advantages resulting from the expansion of cities, the development of railroads, and the opening of the large Russian market to Central Asian goods; it also improved the general living standard through the introduction of sanitary measures, establishment of order, abolition of slavery, and other similar measures. The benefits of Russian administration are clearly reflected in the rapid increase of the native population.[2] One of the by-products of Russian rule was the emergence of a thin layer of native intelligentsia known as *jadidists* who sought to reform native life by reconciling Western and native cultures.

The most onerous features of Russian administration of Central Asia before the collapse of the *ancien régime* was the colonization of the Kazakh prairie, undertaken in 1906 by the government at the initiative of Prime Minister Peter Stolypin. The purpose of this effort was to relieve the overpopulation of the villages in central and southern Russia by transferring the surplus rural inhabitants to the underdeveloped and underpopulated lands of the East. The Stolypin resettlement program resulted in the influx of one million Russians to lands on which the natives had traditionally grazed their cattle, and caused them serious economic as well as psychological suffering.[3] One of the principal reasons for the 1916 revolt of the natives of the prairie against the authorities was pent-up hatred of the newcomers.

During the Revolution of 1917 the natives tried to take advantage of the temporary weakness of the central Russian government to secure a measure of independence, largely in order to settle the land question in their own favor. Their effort failed, however, in part because the intelligentsia directing the national movement was weak and disunited, since it had to fight a continuous rear-guard action against the ultra-orthodox religious groups, and in part because the Bolsheviks were able to secure the cooperation of the Russian population, which feared the consequences of Muslim self-rule. After the establishment of Soviet authority, native resistance flickered in the form of partisan warfare, known as Basmachestvo, until 1922, when the Communists finally extinguished it by a combination of concessions and ruthless military reprisals.[4]

In addition to the standard sources dealing with Central Asia, some of which are mentioned in the footnotes of Mr. Pipes' article, and Soviet newspapers from this area, the author relied for information on a series of interviews which he conducted in the summer of 1953 with refugees from Soviet Central Asia. These interviews concentrated on the cultural and religious habits of the Muslim community. Some of the findings were published in the Middle East Journal (Washington, D.C.), in the spring and summer issues of 1955.

In the six years which followed, the Communists made determined efforts to repair the damage done to their cause by the utter ruthlessness of the local Russians in the course of the Civil War, and tried to redress somewhat the inequality between Russians and natives. They suspended large-scale migration to Central Asia and refrained from interfering in the natives' religious and economic pursuits. After 1922 life for the Central Asian natives returned fairly much to normal, and there was a tendency among local Muslims to view the whole Revolution and its aftermath as one of those inevitable calamities of human existence, which strike unexpectedly and vanish without trace. Indeed, at that time life in Central Asia compared favorably with life in other parts of the Soviet Union, particularly as far as the propertied and religious groups were concerned.

The reprieve, however, was not permanent—it was merely a breathing spell. The Soviet regime was extremely weak in the colonial possessions of the defunct Tsarist empire and needed time to consolidate its hold. As soon as it felt itself master of the situation, it struck with double force, and Central Asia had to relive two revolutions in one: "war communism" and the Stalinist terror telescoped into a single dreadful upheaval.

It is not necessary to describe in detail the various facets of this process, for it did not differ essentially from the control measures imposed on other regions of

[2] The population grew from 9,300,000 in 1897 to 10,400,000 in 1911.

[3] The term "Russians" in the present context refers not only to the so-called Great Russians, but also to the Ukrainians and Belorussians; from the point of view of the native there is no significant difference among these Slavic sub-groups.

[4] These incidents are described in greater detail in the author's *Formation of the Soviet Union,* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1954).

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the Soviet Union. Communist rule in Central Asia, however, does possess certain peculiarities of execution. It is these that lend the Soviet record in the area its specific flavor.

"Drang Nach Osten"

THE outstanding feature of post-1928 Soviet policy in Central Asia was the resumption of mass colonization. The Russian influx occurred in two fairly distinct waves. The first wave struck in the period of the original Five-Year Plan and the attendant collectivization drive. It brought to Central Asia approximately 1,200,000 Russians, some of whom sought refuge in this frontier area from the terrors of the regime, others of whom came in connection with economic expansion. Most of the newcomers who arrived in the 1930's settled in and around the major urban centers of Turkestan. By 1939 the number of Russians residing in Turkestan had risen to approximately 1,900,000 (from 600,000 in 1926).[5]

The second migratory wave was launched early in 1954 and continues today. Apparently a personal project of party boss Khrushchev, the current colonizing drive is in the direction of the Kazakh prairie. Its purpose is to complete the transformation of the Central Asian grassland into agricultural land, along the general lines initiated nearly half a century earlier by Stolypin. In fact, a careful juxtaposition of the maps showing the areas selected for settlement by Stolypin and Khrushchev indicates clearly that the post-1954 settlers occupy areas adjacent to the old Stolypin colonies, rounding out Russian possession of the prairie. The precise number of Russians who have settled in Kazakhstan since 1939 (earlier Soviet migration there was negligible) cannot be determined, because the regime is particularly reticent on population breakdowns for this republic. On the basis of official Soviet figures for 1956, however, a fair estimate is between one million and one million and a half.[6]

While most of the migrants in Central Asia are volunteers (insofar as the word has meaning in the Soviet context), some groups have been settled there against their will. These include, in addition to the forced laborers of various nationalities, several national groups from other parts of the Soviet Union exiled or deported there *en masse*. Thus, for instance, in 1937 the regime resettled 75,000 Koreans from the Far East in Uzbekistan, and in 1944 deported to Central Asia some North Caucasian nationalities, including the Karachai-Balkarians.[7]

The mass influx of Russians is not universally detrimental. In certain parts of Turkestan, for instance, it has brought economic development and has materially benefited the local population. Southern Central Asia has no excess agricultural land, so that large-scale settlement of Russian peasants would be impossible without major irrigation work. The Russian newcomers, therefore, by necessity move into the urban areas. There they do not impinge directly on native settlements; like Western colonists in other parts of Asia or Africa, they establish residence in so-called European quarters rather than in the native quarters.

In the Tashkent district—the administrative and industrial center for all Soviet Central Asia—there were by 1939 already as many Russians as indigenous Uzbeks.[8] Today, in view of the uninterrupted flow of migrants during and following World War II, the Russians undoubtedly constitute a majority of the population in this central district.

The effect of Russian colonization has been most pernicious in the Kazakh region, and this for two reasons: 1) it has been accompanied by a decline of the native population, which resists the Russian influx, and 2) it has been accomplished at the expense of the natives. According to official Soviet census figures, the number of Kazakhs living in the Soviet Union dropped from 3,960,000 in 1926 to 3,099,000 in 1939—a decline of about one million and a half, if one allows for the rate of growth which would have prevailed under normal circumstances.[9] This cold statistical fact hints at the immense tragedy suffered by a relatively primitive population fighting for its way of life, particularly for the right to pursue its nomadic habits and to retain its livestock. Untold numbers of Kazakhs lost their lives in the course of Moscow's brutal collectivization and colonization programs; the rest were dispossessed of the

[5] R. Pipes, "Muslims of Soviet Central Asia: Trends and Prospects", *The Middle East Journal* (Spring and Summer, 1955). Much of the information provided in the present discussion derives from findings originally published in these articles.

[6] The raw figures are supplied by the Central Statistical Administration of the Council of Ministers, *Narodnoe khoziaistvo SSSR* [National Economy of the USSR], Moscow, 1956.

[7] Figure on the Koreans from *Uzbekistan—ekonomikogeograficheskaia kharakteristika,* [Uzbekistan—Economic-Geographic Characteristics], Economic Institute of the Uzbek Republic's Academy of Sciences, (Tashkent, 1950), p. 76. Information on the Karachai-Balkarians from *Sovetskaia Kirgizia* [Soviet Kirgizia] May 19, 1956, as cited in the *Caucasian Review,* No. 3 (Munich, 1956), p. 126.

[8] *Uzbekistan,* pp. 75-76.

[9] Figures of the 1926 and 1939 census, cited, among other places, in F. Lorimer, *The Population of the Soviet Union: History and Prospects,* (Geneva, 1946).

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lands which they had traditionally used for grazing purposes, and were forced either to become unskilled labor for their Russian masters, or to move on to the arid, unproductive areas of southern Kazakhstan. The huge influx of Russian migrants, coupled with this decline in the native population, has given the Russians an absolute majority in Kazakhstan: on the basis of Soviet statistics, it can be estimated that Russians today constitute 55 percent of the population, Kazakhs 40 percent.

The Impact of Migration

THE Russian migration to Central Asia is pregnant with grave consequences. First and uppermost, it changes radically the ethnographic structure of that region. A land, which within the memory of the oldest living generation was a purely Muslim preserve, is today a multinational territory, in which the European settlers constitute approximately one-third of the overall population, and an actual majority in the areas of Kazakhstan and the Tashkent District.[10] Nor is there any indication that the pace of Russian colonization is slackening. The "opening of the virgin lands" (a euphemism for the colonization of the Kazakh prairie) is far from completed, and it is estimated that it will take 1,500,000 settlers to complete this program. Turkestan, which in consequence of its strategic location, receives an increasing share of Russian industry, is also likely to have to absorb large numbers of additional migrants.

This certainly must have its impact on the cultural life of the Muslims of Central Asia. The nature of the impact, however, is difficult to assess and subject to controversy. Some scholars feel that most of the minorities in the Soviet Union are gradually succumbing to russification and losing their national identity in favor of a new "Soviet" nationality.[11] Others, among them the author of this essay, hold the opposite view, and maintain that under the crust of assimilation and cultural *Gleichschaltung* virile national movements are taking shape. The evidence for either viewpoint is scanty and inadequate.

The data supplied by Soviet sources and by interviews with refugees from Central Asia do not seem to indicate anything like a large-scale assimilation of the natives. The main preventives are the enormous cultural gulf separating the Slavic and Muslim populations, and the unequal status of the two societies, one of which represents the ruling power, the other its subject. The available evidence indicates that the two groups live side by side in two fairly self-contained communities, with contact between them confined largely to the exigencies of daily life: there is little spontaneous social intercourse, and virtually no inter-marriage.

This is not to say that Russian rule and Russian colonization exercise no influence on the culture of the native population. In fact, they have a strong impact, but their effect is to transform rather than to uproot, to stimulate rather than to absorb. Russian culture is carried to the Muslim community either through conscious policies of the regime or through more subtle, indirect influences. In both cases, only those features of Russian culture which accord with the Muslim society's general historical evolution—that is to say, those which tend toward westernization—seem to make a lasting imprint.

Anti-Islamism: Cultural and Social

MOSCOW'S approach to the native population of Central Asia, as to all the populations under its control, is purely instrumental: it treats human beings primarily as production factors in the economic development of the USSR. To obtain their maximum utility, it strives to cut them off from all social ties, transforming them into atomized particles of an amorphous mass whch can be used however and whenever needed. In Central Asia this entails the utter destruction of Islamic culture and Islamic institutions, whose hold on the population is considerably stronger (especially in Turkestan) than is the case with the Orthodox Church in Russia proper.

This aim the Soviet regime has endeavored to achieve by a series of anti-Islamic measures, initiated around 1928 and still in force today. First, by means of two compulsory alphabet reforms—which first introduced the Latin script in place of the traditional Arabic, and then replaced the Latin with the Cyrillic (Russian)—the Soviet regime effectively cut off the younger generations from the entire body of Islamic literature and learning. Thus the Soviet Muslims have been far more isolated from their cultural heritage than have the Russian people or others of the more privileged national groups in the Soviet Union. This drive against Islamic culture was accompanied by a systematic destruction of all the mosques (save for a few in the major cities), arrests of *mullahs* and other religious leaders, the impounding of Qur'ans and prayer books, and many other similar measures.

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[10] The significance of this fact may be more vividly brought to mind by recalling that in Algeria, where a national conflict of great bitterness has been underway for some years, French settlers constitute a mere 12.3 percent of the total population.

[11] A recent proponent of this view is Frederick Barghoorn, in his *Soviet Russian Nationalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956).

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The success of these measures, insofar as it is possible to judge on the basis of highly incomplete data, seems mixed. Ritual seems to have suffered most; it is safe to say that the bulk of the urban Muslim youth, plus a considerable proportion of the rural youth, does not pray and does not know how to pray. Least affected are Islamic practices which are not incompatible with the requirements of a modern industrialized society and which, though religious in origin, have acquired something of a national significance: circumcision, certain holidays, and so forth. In general, under the extreme pressure of Soviet policy, Islam in Central Asia seems to have undergone in a single generation the process of "secularization," a process well known in Western religious experience.

The second major step undertaken by the regime in order to destroy the cohesion of the Muslim population has been to break down the single community, based on the religious criterion, into several communities, based on the nation criterion. This necessitated the creation of synthetic nationalities, distinguished from one another (save for the Iranian Tajiks) by nothing more than certain minor linguistic differences. The establishment in Central Asia of the five native republics in the mid-1920's which has been cited often as proof of Soviet enlightenment and willingness to meet the "legitimate" demands of national minorities, represented in fact something quite different—namely, an effort to forestall Pan-Islamism or Pan-Turanianism from uniting all the Central Asian Muslims into a single force.

This aspect of Soviet policy in Central Asia seems to have been a great success, probably more so than the regime either anticipated or desired. The reason is not hard to find. The Communists seem to have overestimated the danger of Pan-Islamism and Pan-Turanianism, neither of which had sunk deep roots in Muslim consciousness in this area. In an unnecessarily energetic effort to neutralize these imagined forces, the regime provided the as yet highly fluid native striving toward reform, with concrete, legitimate foci around which to solidify. The result was the crystallization of a rather amorphous native mass, once divided into tribes, communities and other small groupings, into five or six definite nationalities.

Russification

THE third important Soviet policy is russification. This takes several forms: attempts to alter the vocabulary of the native language through the insertion of Russian words in their pure Russian form; the imposition of stiff Russian language prerequisites for attendance at institutions of higher learning or for career positions in the republics; the active fostering of Russian literature, art, and history. The process is a relentless one, carried out with all the resources at the disposal of a totalitarian regime and assisted by the ever-growing Russian population in Central Asia.

How successful are these russificatory measures? The answer depends on the class one has in mind. The lowest classes of the native population, the rural and urban working groups, are least affected. These groups continue to lead their lives according to traditional patterns, virtually unaffected by Russian culture and in some cases unexposed to it. It is here that one finds the deepest resentment of the Russians and their way of life; this population hates the Russians with a passionate, non-intellectualized hatred, blaming them for the misfortunes, poverty, and suffering which they have experienced in the past forty years. The regime apparently realizes this fact and makes no great effort to influence the lowest classes, leaving them to their own devices as long as they fulfill their obligations to the economic and military machine. The efforts which would be required to transform this element culturally would hardly be justified by the results.

The situation is more complex in the case of the intelligentsia, on which the regime concentrates its attention. The large Muslim intelligentsia in Central Asia seems to find itself in an anomalous and rather difficult situation. On the one hand, it feels a deep loyalty to the masses of the Muslim population; on the other it is strongly attracted to the "modern" way of life, to science, technology and all the other aspects of Western life which the Soviet regime and its Russian representatives foster. Nationalism is for the intelligentsia a natural compromise between two contrasting forces, between tradition and westernization.

Strange as it may seem it is precisely for this reason that the intelligentsia does not uncritically reject russification. The point is that under conditions prevailing in Central Asia, Russian language and culture are the carriers of Western civilization, the only links with the modern world available to the Soviet Muslims. Only by learning Russian and acquiring a higher Russian education can the native intellectual open the doors to the outer world. Russian culture performs for him the same function English culture once performed for the Indian, and French culture for the North African. Except for a thin layer of native functionaries who for personal advantage identify themselves completely with the ruling power, very much like colonial servitors in other parts of the world, the intellectuals do not seem to abandon their native cultures: they become bilingual, and they adapt certain desirable features of Russian

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civilization to their own traditions. They continue, by and large, the movement of the pre-revolutionary *jaddidists*. Among them, the net effect of Soviet russificatory measures is not so much russification as westernization.

The ingredients which go to make up the outlook of the native intelligentsia may be summarized as follows: 1) an intense pride in their historical past; 2) contempt for all religion, including Islam, but attachment to certain religious observances; 3) unlimited faith in the power of science to solve all problems and cure all ills; 4) confidence in their ability, once freed from the shackles of Soviet control, to accomplish great things, and to elevate their nations to the rank of great powers. The intelligentsia resents Soviet rule and certain features of Communist policy, but it is not anti-Russian in the sense that the less literate classes are. Yet in the long run its nationalism and resentment are far more dangerous to the regime: as Western experience has shown, the native peasant, for all his xenophobia, is more tractable than his cousin who has been educated in Paris or London.

* * *

In broad terms, therefore, the social and cultural processes occurring in Soviet Central Asia do not differ fundamentally from those taking place in other colonial or ex-colonial areas of the world. In both instances native societies, under the impact of European culture, become secularized, westernized. They evolve a new way of life resulting from an amalgam of traditional and imported values. In both instances this movement is led by a native intelligentsia which is ambitious, self-assured and intensely nationalistic.

The peculiar feature of the Soviet experience lies in the tempo and in the ruthlessness with which this transformation is being accomplished. Phases of development which in other, freer societies take several generations, are compressed in the Soviet Union into one or two generations; processes which elsewhere are allowed to take their own course, are here imposed from above by a virtually omnipotent regime. It is not inconceivable that the very violence with which these processes are taking place will one day breed a proportionately violent reaction, as the further synthesis of native and "imported" values engenders new forms of nationalistic striving.

Soviet Newspaper Criticizes *Problems of Communism*

An article in the January 3, 1957 issue of *Sovetskaia Rossia* (Soviet Russia), published in Moscow, carries the following comment on *Problems of Communism*:

***Problems of Communism*, the bi-monthly magazine which crudely falsifies the teachings of scientific socialism and conditions in socialist countries, is designed for intellectuals. It is distributed free of charge to the editors of newspapers and magazines, government representatives of various countries, etc.**

In this connection, we wish to state the following:

1. *Problems of Communism* is available to everyone, and not only to the select few, as implied by *Sovetskaia Rossia*.

2. To our knowledge, no one has ever "crudely falsified" either "the teachings of scientific socialism" or "conditions in socialist countries" on the pages of this journal. We invite the Editors of *Sovetskaia Rossia* to single out specific articles, specific passages, specific instances of the kind of "falsification" they refer to. We are prepared to publish their communication exactly as it is received, without any alterations or deletions.

3. In case we receive such a communication, we reserve the right to reply to it, and we merely ask that our reply be reprinted in full on the pages of *Sovetskaia Rossia*.

—The Editors, *Problems of Communism*

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Communist Experiments with the Ballot

By PAUL WILLEN

ON January 20 of this year the new Polish regime, forged during the turbulent autumn months of 1956, held its first national elections. The results were generally interpreted as a resounding victory for Wladyslaw Gomulka, the hero of the political convulsion which has brought Poland a measure of genuine independence from Soviet control.

The scope of Gomulka's triumph startled many observers. But what was perhaps even more startling was that, for the first time in the history of communism, the results of an election were uncertain—in spite of the precautions Gomulka took to insure a victory. The contrast with the perfunctory and mechanical plebiscites of the Stalinist era could hardly be more striking.

Gomulka's personal triumph was apparently quite genuine. But precisely what else these elections reflected remains obscure, and subject to much debate. Like the Yugoslav elections of October-November 1953 and the Hungarian elections of November 1954—the only precedents for Gomulka's bold experiment—the Polish elections were in that twilight zone between rigid Stalinism and genuine democracy in which lie so many recent developments in Eastern Europe. None of these three elections was completely open and free; and yet each of the three departed significantly from the Soviet practice of mechanical "elections," once the only model for Eastern Europe.

These electoral experiments were carried out in the triad of East European countries most affected by post-Stalin "reform" tendencies. The Yugoslav experiment brought to a culmination Tito's sweeping program of administrative decentralization. The Hungarian electoral compromise occurred at the climax of Imre Nagy's ill-fated "new course" of 1953-55. The Polish elections followed 18 months of far-reaching popular ferment, intellectual unrest, and administrative reform.[1]

In each case the Communist regime evinced a readiness to risk the façade of unanimity produced by a Stalinist plebiscite in return for a measure of genuine popular support. The Communist leaders felt, on the one hand, the need for some expression of the popular will, and, on the other, the fear that its full expression might mean the destruction of their political monopoly. It is reported that when one of Yugoslavia's most popular leaders, Moshe Pijade, was asked if his regime could win a free election, he replied, "of course we would win." Why not have free elections in that case? "Well," said Pijade, "maybe we would lose."[2]

This conflict in the attitude of the Communists is reflected in the strange amalgam of laws which govern the new type of Communist pseudo-election. The sheer complexity of these new provisions—designed to elicit and check popular opinion simultaneously—would delight an ambitious student of political science. The laws would hardly warrant serious study, however, since they are clearly of an *ad hoc* character; they were not devised as permanent directives but were in each case tailored to suit the situation of the moment. It is already very doubtful that Hungary's "liberal" 1954 code will be given another airing; the 1953 Yugoslav laws will probably be overhauled before the 1956 autumn elections; and Poland's next national election is likely to be held under far more open circumstances or not at all.

Mr. Willen, who has written many articles on Soviet orbit political and cultural affairs, will soon publish a book on post-Stalin developments in East Europe. A frequent contributor to *Problems of Communism,* Mr. Willen was last represented in these pages with "New Era in Soviet Architecture?" Vol. 5 (July-August, 1956).

[1] For a discussion of literary ferment in post-Stalin Poland see Czeslaw Milosz, "Poland: Voices of Disillusion," *Problems of Communism,* Vol. 5 (May-June 1956); on the trade unions in the same period see Kazimierz Grzybowski, "Trade Unions in Communist Poland," *Problems of Communism,* Vol. 5 (September-October, 1956); on political developments up to Gomulka's return to political life in October 1956 see Alexander Korab, "Poland: The Search for Independence," *Problems of Communism,* Vol. 5 (November-December, 1956).

[2] Cited by Thomas Hammond, "Jugoslav Elections: Democracy in Small Doses," *Political Science Quarterly,* Vol. LXX, No. 1, p. 73.

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Freer Nominations: Anti-Communist Voices

THE nomination procedures in these three elections are indicative both of the shift away from Stalinist methods and the distance from truly democratic practices. The old Stalinist procedure was simple and notorious: a closed meeting of the local party cell, acting on instructions from a higher body, would sift through names and then make public announcement of a single list. In Yugoslavia (1953) and Hungary (1954) this practice was modified; in its place there were open "voters' meetings" at which nominations could be made comparatively freely.[3] In Hungary, however, two factors militated against the citizen who attempted to capitalize on this "freedom" of nomination. In the first place there were only as many candidates as there were offices, and the practical difficulties of forcing out one of the regime-sponsored candidates, coupled with the pressures which could be exerted against the man bold enough to attempt to do so, were almost invariably enough to preclude effective use of the new "freedom." Despite this, 15 percent of the official candidates were actually rejected in favor of more acceptable people. In Yugoslavia, on the other hand, candidates nominated freely could actually be added to the full slate of regime-sponsored candidates, although here, too, many pressures could be exerted against both the nominator and the candidate and their families.

Nevertheless, in the Yugoslav voters' meeting there were many fierce debates, in which slogans such as "we don't want enemies of the peasants" were frequently heard.[4] In one Serbian village a violent discussion raged over whether one nominee would "reduce the exorbitant taxes."[5] A Belgrade newspaper complained that in a Dalmatian town *"kulaks"* seeking nomination "were serving wine and *slivovica* to everyone promising to vote for them."[6] In Hungary the issues were much more muffled, and the cry was for "local people, our own." In Hajdu-Bijar County, for example, a local councilman was rejected by the voters because "he spoke to us without feeling."[7] In the town of Andornaketalya a candidate proposed by the local authorities was turned down in favor of someone "to whom the people could go with confidence."[8]

In most villages party control was sufficiently strong, or popular opposition sufficiently weak, to prevent such open conflicts; but scores of reports appeared in the press during the nomination period reflecting the cautious excitement which gripped the Yugoslav and Hungarian countryside as a result of its limited political reenfranchisement. According to a Yugoslav reporter, feelings reached such a pitch in some communities that "it became quite impossible to impose on the voters a candidate they didn't like."[9] The percentage of the Yugoslav regime-proposed candidates actually rejected in favor of more acceptable people is unknown, but it was probably higher than in Hungary.

In Poland there were no open "voters' meetings." Instead, nominations—60,000 of them—were presented to local commissions composed of representatives of the three parties, the United Peasant, Democratic, and United Workers' (Communist) Party.[10] The Communist party clearly dominated these local commissions, as it did the central three-party Commission which received the almost 10,000 nominations approved by the local commissions. The central Commission selected some 729 candidates to run for the 451 parliament seats. While the nomination procedure was thus controlled and secret, the Commission's selection of candidates showed considerable awareness of mounting popular feeling against the orthodox Communists. Many prominent Catholic laymen and other non-Communists were put in leading positions on the ballot. In this respect, the Polish elections were far bolder than either their Yugoslav or Hungarian predecessors.

Another important "reform" assured the voters a limited choice among candidates. In Yugoslavia 38 of the 484 Federal Assembly seats were disputed, eight of them as the result of popular "petitions" (provided for in the law) rather than of formal nomination at a "voters' meeting." One quarter of the provincial (Republic) assembly seats were also contested; while in Macedonia 204 candidates ran for 107 seats. The regime

[3] Both regimes were ambiguous in their attitude toward the voters' meetings. In Hungary the regime scolded officials who tried, by fair means or foul, to "secure a Communist majority in the nominating committees" simply because they were afraid of being "outvoted" (*Szabad Nep,* October 11, 1954); on the other hand, Imre Nagy himself boasted of the enemy's failure to "smuggle its representatives into the ranks of council nominees" (*Ibid.,* November 16). In Yugoslavia, although nominations were technically free, a nominee could be added to the list only if a significant number of those present at the voters' meeting indicated their approval, and if, subsequently, his nomination were approved by at least one-fourth of the district's constituencies.

[4] See *Vjesnik* (Zagreb), September 22, 24, *et passim* (1953), for many examples of this type of sloganeering.

[5] *Borba* (Belgrade), October 27, 1953.

[6] *Nova armija* (Belgrade), November 10, 1953.

[7] *Szabad nep* (Budapest), October 16, 1954.

[8] *Ibid.,* October 19, 1954.

[9] *Borba* (Zagreb), October 3, 1953.

[10] Nominations were sent in by every conceivable legally-constituted social and economic organization, as well as by local caucuses of the three parties.

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was not pleased with this situation, especially when candidates began to compete for votes by attacking each other. A number of efforts, some of them successful, were made to encourage competing candidates to resign from the race.[11]

In Poland the Stalinist dictum of "one candidate for one post" was openly abandoned. There were approximately seven candidates for every four seats in the Parliament (the Sejm), although the regime made strenuous efforts to persuade the people not to avail themselves of the choice thereby made possible. In Hungary, on the other hand, the old method of running precisely as many candidates as there were offices open was followed strictly. However, the Stalinist procedure of voting for the entire "list" of candidates, rather than for single candidates, was abandoned; and the result was a more direct form of voting.

The Facade of Unanimity Shattered

THE election "campaigns" were a curious combination of traditional sham and the new reality. In Hungary, where there were no alternative candidates, the "campaign" was something of an anti-climax after the excitement of the voters' meetings. But in Yugoslavia the pre-election debates frequently assumed vigorous proportions, especially in those few districts where several candidates were running. Certain candidates, nominated without the support of the local authorities according to the procedures outlined above, were accused of "welcoming support from reactionaries." Some candidates promised an increased share in factory profits; still others promised that, if elected, they would abolish taxation. In Bosnia, with its large Moslem population, several candidates proposed lifting the postwar ban on wearing the veil. One Croatian candidate promised to "change the whole administration in the district, starting with the janitors."[12]

In Poland, where national issues rather than local ones were the major focus, personal campaigning was confined largely to private door-to-door canvassing, and even this was discouraged by the regime. The major events in the pre-election period were the quiet efforts of the clergy to encourage citizens to vote and Gomulka's last-minute warning that Poland would "disappear from the map of Europe" unless his candidates were sup-

[11] A candidate in Resen, Macedonia, who was running against the secretary of the local party committee, was forced to withdraw after a particularly bitter attack was launched on him for "lack of discipline and careerism." *Borba* (Belgrade), November 11, 1953.

[12] *Ibid.*, November 5, 1953.

A Small Error. . . .

Yesterday we held a meeting attended by the representative of the Regional Union of Communal Cooperatives. Not a very big fellow, bald, but pleasant. He listened, took notes, and seemed to be fatigued. When it came to voting, he gave the chairman a little list.

"The mother organization," said the chairman, rising, "the mother organization submits the names of the following candidates for the administrative board of the Communal Cooperative."

He lifted the little list to his eyes, and began reading the names:

"Citizen Kwiatkowski . . ."

Stormy applause reverberated through the room.

"Citizen Brzeszczot . . . ."

"Long live!", we shouted.

"Bravo!"

"And Citizen Gardziel."

Again the room shook with applause.

"Who is in favor," asked the chairman. "Everybody? Thank you. I will now call upon the newly elected board to take its place in the presidium."

A new wave of enthusiasm. When the clamor died down, the chairman asked the newly elected members to step up to the presidium. Nobody rose. The regional representative bent over to the chairman and whispered something into his ear. Then the chairman asked:

"Is Citizen Kwiatkowski here?"

Silence.

"And Citizen Brzeszczot?"

No, there was no sign of Brzeszczot, and Citizen Gardziel was not to be seen, either.

"There are no such people here at all," a voice from the back of the room spoke out. It belonged to Zyzio, who is an idiot, and who is given to complicating the simplest matters.

The representative began frantically to go through his pockets, and then announced that an error had been made: the list that he had read off actually pertained to another locality. This gave him an opportunity to give us a little didactic lecture.

A strange person.

He himself got the lists confused, yet that didn't prevent him from reproaching the others.

—From* Szpilki *(Warsaw), August 8, 1954.

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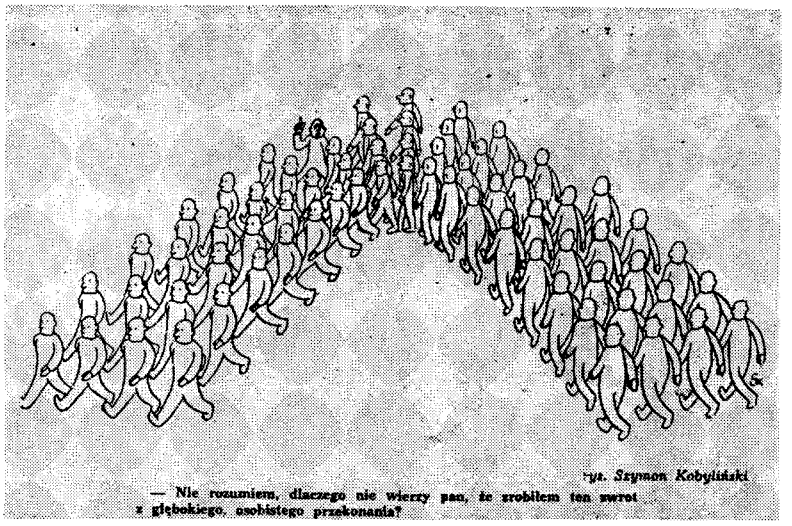
rys. Szymon Kobyliński
— Nie rozumiem, dlaczego nie wierzy pan, że zrobiłem ten zwrot z głębokiego, osobistego przekonania?

—Why is it you don't believe that I have reversed myself out of a profound personal conviction?

—From *Szpilki* (Warsaw), December 2, 1956.

ported. As in Hungary and Yugoslavia, the regime reserved for itself the right, which it exercised, to remove from the ballot candidates who behaved in a manner ill-befitting "socialist elections." [13]

The results of the elections have as many complex aspects as the nomination procedures and the campaign itself. In all three countries the number of voters supporting the "national front" ranged between 85 and 95 percent—the more or less customary "demonstration" of supporting a Communist election. However, the "totals" announced (accurate or not) were only a small part of the picture.

In Hungary 589 local councilmen, 21 town councilmen, and two county councilmen did not receive the necessary 50 percent of the vote; according to the electoral law they were thereby "defeated" and were supposed to stand again in special elections. Although the losers constituted only 0.6 percent of the total number of candidates, the fact that regime-backed candidates were considered even temporarily "defeated" broke all Stalinist precedent. (Actually, the special elections were never held, since Nagy's downfall and replacement by Rakosi in February 1955 led to the abrupt abandonment of most "new course" reforms.)

Of significance, the breakdown of the total vote in Hungary on a county-by-county basis revealed that the percentage of "opposition" votes in the western counties was considerably higher than that in the eastern counties. Thus, of the 589 defeated local council candidates, 307 ran in the five (19 counties in all Hungary) western counties of Gyoer, Somogy, Vas, Veszprem, and Zala.

In Yugoslavia, a number of candidates who were not given the full support of the local authorities were elected to various provincial (Republic-level) assemblies, with the largest number (four) entering the Macedonian Assembly. Of these four however only two were admitted as members of the Deputies' Club with full rights. The total "opposition" vote for the country has been calculated as almost 15 per cent, far in excess of the usual 3-4 per cent admitted in Communist polls.[14] The range of "opposition" votes from region to region was even more striking. In the prosperous Vojvodina it was 21 per cent; in one district (Djakovo) it was 43.3 per cent. In staunchly Catholic Slovenia the "opposition" vote was proportionately higher than in heavily Communist Montenegro. The figures themselves may not be accurate, in an absolute sense; but the variations from region to region unquestionably reflect variations in popular sentiment.

Although the precise meaning of the Polish election results will be disputed for many months, certain general conclusions may be drawn. If the Yugoslav elections were more free than the Hungarian experiment, the Polish elections were more revealing than the Yugoslav variant. The vast majority of "favored" candidates (447 out of 452) were elected to the Sejm in accordance with Gomulka's fervent appeal to the electorate.

[13] Osobka-Morawski, a socialist and first postwar premier of Poland, was removed from the ballot for his "discordant" attitude, *i.e.*, because he spoke out too strongly against the Communists.

[14] The concept of "opposition" vote is not used in the Communist press. It is Hammond's, and is computed by totalling the number who abstained from voting (10.6 per cent) and the number whose votes were "invalid" (4.3 per cent). The latter figure represents both those who voted against the whole ticket as well as genuine technical invalidations. See Hammond, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

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But included among the "favored" were many non-Communists, Catholic laymen, and representatives of the two "collaborating" parties, the United Peasant and the Democratic Parties. Of 22 Catholic candidates, 12 were victorious; one of them, Stanislaw Stomma, won more votes than Premier Cyrankiewicz, who ran in the same Cracow district. Indeed, every single Politburo member and Central Committee Secretary, with the exception of Gomulka and Marian Spychalski, *ran behind* some opposing non-Communist candidates. At the same time, the "Stalinist" candidates did consistently worse than the "ex-Stalinists" or the "national Communists." While the national Communists, like Ochab and Morawski, averaged between 85 and 95 per cent and Gomulka got close to 100 per cent, the unrepentant Stalinists like Pawlak, Titkow, and Musialowa, received only 66-81 per cent of the potential votes in their districts. Others with very high votes—*i. e.*, above 95 per cent—were Catholics, United Peasant Party or Democratic Party leaders.

* * *

In the highly complex circumstances outlined, it is little wonder that, except in the case of Poland, where certain modest conclusions can be drawn, the objective observer is reluctant to say precisely what these elections signify. Clearly none of them was mere window dressing. Just as clearly, no Communist government which has offered its subject peoples even such minimal electoral rights can easily restore the monolithic facade of earlier years.

Perhaps the most important consequence of these elections is that some form of communication, however scant, was restored between rulers and ruled. The once-disenfranchised elements in the population spoke; they underwent the exhilarating experience of rejecting some of the more odious regime officials from office. In Hungary, of course, whatever tenuous communication between the people and the regime was established by Nagy in 1954 was later undermined by Rakosi and completely destroyed in the course of the popular revolt. But while the first Nagy regime remained in power, more than 50,000 Hungarian voters could say to themselves, with some satisfaction, that they had participated in the defeat—however temporary—of a particularly hated regime official.

In Yugoslavia, popular sentiment was registered in a hundred little ways: in speeches, nominations, offerings of *slivovica,* and occasionally even in the final compilation of votes. In Poland the party's new First Secretary, Gomulka, was compelled to make a public appeal for popular co-operation; he dared not resort to the old tactic of open terror.

And yet, needless to repeat, these were not genuine elections. Organized political activity was severely restricted; political choice, where it existed at all, was on a superficial level; balloting was frequently not secret; there was no real way for the "opposition" to check on the accuracy of the vote-tabulating procedures. Only in Hungary's local (village) councils and in Yugoslavia's provincial (Republic) assemblies was the impact of the elections directly felt; and in both countries there were increasing complaints of "localist" tendencies in these local organs.[15] The central legislative bodies to which candidates were "elected" remained organs without basic authority. In this regard, the elections had only symbolic meaning at best. There are some indications that this situation may be altered regarding the Polish Sejm. But even should the regime permit a genuine form of debate in the Sejm, Poland would still be a good distance from having a meaningful national legislature.

In the perspective of democratic values, these three elections were fairly timid experiments. Yet in the perspective of evolving East European communism, these experiments have had great importance. The Hungarian elections of November 1954 may be seen as a prelude to the great revolution of two years later. The Yugoslav election of October-November 1953 may be considered part of the background of the celebrated Djilas case, which was developing even as the ballots were being counted. The promises made during the election would plague the regimes that made them for years to come; and the taste of electoral freedom would stimulate hopes that would not be easily extingushed.

The difference between the post-election responses in Hungary and Yugoslavia—revolution in one, the Djilas case in the other—is perhaps an accurate reflection of the gap between Rakosi's Stalinism and Tito's reforms. But in both cases the elections were sufficiently provocative to force fundamental national conflicts into the forefront. Similar national problems face Poland as it emerges from what remains, thus far, the boldest experiment in freedom of the ballot into the bleak political atmosphere of East European communism.

[15] See for example *Tanacsok lapja* (the official organ of the Hungarian local councils), July 5, 1955.

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East Germany:

Soviet Rampart or Achilles' Heel?

By W. K.

THE series of East European uprisings against Soviet rule which reached a heroic climax in Hungary last November was originally set in motion on June 16, 1953, when some 300 workers employed on a building site in East Berlin's *Stalinallee* struck in protest against increased labor norms and reduced pay. In a matter of hours what had started as a simple, localized expression of economic dissatisfaction developed into a widespread and violent political demonstration against the Communist rulers of the German "Democratic Republic" and their Soviet masters. After this spontaneous outburst had been ruthlessly suppressed, the Soviet leaders deemed it safe to inaugurate, throughout the orbit, a policy of cautious political relaxation and limited economic concessions. But they grossly misjudged the climate of opinion in the subjugated countries. The eventual penalty for this misjudgment was the new outbreak at Poznan in June 1956, followed by the bloodless Polish "October revolution" and the nationwide Hungarian uprising, which shook the Soviet East European empire to its very foundations.

Despite the impact of these new upheavals, East Germany, where the smoldering fires of unrest first burst into flame, has remained strangely, if uneasily quiet. It remains in the firm, unrelenting grip of the most Stalinist of all the satellite Communist regimes, and behind the party leadership stands a Soviet occupation force of close to 400,000 men armed with all the weapons of modern war. Quite clearly the Soviet leaders regard East Germany as more vital to the USSR than any other part of their empire: at best they see in it a potential springboard for expansion into Western Europe; at worst it would serve as their most potent bargaining weapon for negotiating a global settlement with the West. Hence, in a very real sense, East Germany is the touchstone of Soviet external policy.

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Political Stalinization

THE political processes by which a thoroughly Stalinist type of party dictatorship was forged in East Germany followed the same tactical pattern as in the other Soviet-occupied areas of Eastern Europe. When the East German Communist Party first established itself under the protecting guns of the Red Army, it stated its policy in typically deceiving terms of lip-service to nationalist and democratic principles:

> **It would be wrong to force upon Germany the Soviet system because it is not in conformity with Germany's present stage of development. It is our view that the decisive interests of the German people in the present situation demand that Germany should enter upon a different road—that of setting up an anti-Fascist democratic regime, a parliamentary democratic republic with all democratic rights and liberties for the people. . . .**[1]

Three years later the last vestiges of such a special "German road to socialism" were interred when Anton Ackermann, its chief protagonist, declared:

> **The theory of a special German road to socialism opens the way to anti-Bolshevism, instead of combatting it with maximum force.**[2]

The pledge of parliamentary democracy also proved a deception as the Communists systematically eliminated political opposition both outside and within the party. The first victims were the Social Democrats, whose belief in the need for uniting the workers led them to accept the risk of losing their freedom of political action through a merger with the Communists.

The Social Democratic Party Congress of April 1946, which pronounced in favor of merging with the Communists to form the Socialist Unity Party (SED), sealed the political fate both of the Social Democrats and of the industrial working class. The free trade unions perished with the SPD, and their place was taken by the "Free German Trade Union Council," a Communist-

[1] *Die Deutsche Volkszeitung* (Berlin), June 13, 1945.
[2] *Neues Deutschland* (Berlin), September 24, 1948.

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controlled compulsory state organization which deprived the workers of their rights to bargain collectively and to strike.

Having eliminated all independent working class representation, the Communists directed their next onslaught against the two middle-class parties, the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). At the end of 1947 the anti-Communist leaders of the CDU were supplanted, under Soviet pressure, by new men ready to cooperate unreservedly with the Communists; in the case of the LDP the death of its chairman brought a change in leadership that had the same result. These steps were later reinforced by the creation of two new front parties designed to draw peasant and middle-class support away from the existing non-Communist groups: the Democratic Farmers' Party (DBP) and the National Democratic Party (NDP), the latter particularly aimed at cultivating former Nazis.

Emasculation of the rival political parties was accompanied by the abandonment of all pretense of free elections. The first step was the introduction, in the 1949 parliamentary elections, of a single "national front" list of candidates, with the distribution of seats among the parties fixed in advance to assure SED control. In October 1950 the balloting papers no longer made provision for registering dissenting votes, and the fiction of party unity was carried further by the introduction of common election posters.

Within SED itself the Communists steadily tightened their grip on the reins of leadership. By 1949 the Central Secretariat which had run the party since the 1946 merger, and on which the Communists and former Social Democrats were equally represented, had been replaced by a Politburo on the Soviet model, five of its nine members Communists, and a Politburo Secretariat on which Communists filled four out of the five posts. The party congress concurrently was shorn of its supposedly supreme policy-making authority under the SED constitution. More and more, policy was decided by restricted, *ad hoc* conferences of the party leaders and appointed officials, and the congress found itself reduced to a mere rubber stamp.

Any signs of disobedience within the party ranks were summarily dealt with. In August 1950 alleged connections with Anglo-American espionage agencies served as the pretext for a sweeping purge in which a number of prominent party members were expelled and others relieved of their party functions.

Thus the way was paved for rapid enforcement of the process of "building socialism" in East Germany according to strict Stalinist precepts. Along with politico-economic sovietization at home, steps were taken toward closer integration in the orbit, and the party leadership faithfully echoed the current Moscow policy line condemning "nationalist deviationism" in the satellites and assailing the West. A resolution adopted by a party conference in the summer of 1952 declared:

> **The crimes of the Tito clique, the criminal activities of the Slansky group in Czechoslovakia and of the Gomulka group in Poland . . . show how the enemy is trying to carry out his criminal activities in our ranks. The party can only protect itself against this by resolute struggle against any form of conciliation.[3]**

As to the West, party Secretary General Walter Ulbricht preached sharpened vigilance and hatred against "the American, British and French imperialists."[4]

The domestic implications of these pronouncements soon became clear. In January 1953 two non-Communist members of the government—Foreign Minister Dertinger, of the CDU, and Trade and Supply Minister Hamann, chairman of the LDP—were removed from office and jailed. In May the veteran party leader, Franz Dahlem, was expelled from the Politburo "because of his political blindness toward the activity of imperialist agents" and later arrested.[5]

Respite and Reaction

STALIN'S death brought a shortlived relaxation of East German policy. In June 1953 the SED Politburo admitted that a number of mistakes had been made in the past, and promised certain remedial measures. Hardly had this pronouncement been made, however, when an error of judgment on the part of some minor party officials touched off the uprising of June 16, which spread rapidly throughout the eastern zone of Germany. Only the intervention of Soviet tanks and troops saved the government and party.

The regime's reaction to the uprising was two-fold. On the one hand, promises of economic concessions were reiterated; on the other, the regime suppressed the revolt with an iron hand that underlined its determination to permit no weakening of the party dictatorship. According to the Minister of State Security, 25 persons were killed and 378 injured in putting down the rebellion itself, but hundreds more suffered from the punitive action which followed. Courts-martial sentenced at least 16 demonstrators to death and several hundred to imprisonment.

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[3] *Neues Deutschland,* July 13, 1952.

[4] *Ibid.,* July 11, 1952.

[5] Quotation from *Taegliche Rundschau,* May 16, 1953.

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A new purge of government and party officials was clearly indicative of a move back toward reaction. Those in the government who favored a moderate course were dismissed from their posts. Minister of Justice Max Fechner, who tried to defend the workers' right to strike, was not only removed from office but imprisoned, the party naming as his successor Hilde Benjamin, notorious for the ruthless sentences she had handed down in a series of show trials. Wilhelm Zaisser, Minister of State Security, and Rudolf Hernnstadt, editor of the party organ *Neues Deutschland,* also were dismissed from their posts and from the party Central Committee for their "defeatist attitude." Still other prominent party figures—among them the erstwhile "national deviationist," Ackermann—were accused of complicity in the crimes of Zaisser and Hernnstadt.

The ensuing period saw a gradual withdrawal from the "new course" and a return by the East German party leadership to the harsher policies in force up to Stalin's death. At the same time ties with the Soviet orbit were further strengthened, notably by East German participation in the conclusion of the Warsaw pact of May 1955, and by the enactment in early 1956 of legislation establishing a Ministry of Defense and an East German army subordinated to the command of Soviet Marshal Konev.

—If I hang Aunt Frieda there, the comrades will think we are an ideologically backward family. If I choose the other pictures, we'll be accused of practicing the cult of personality. (Portraits on floor are of Ulbricht and Grotewohl.)

—From *Eulenspiegel* (East Berlin), November, 1956.

Thus, Stalinism was still the order of the day in East Germany when the momentous decisions of the Twentieth CPSU Congress intervened. Yet Khrushchev's repudiation of Stalin caused noticeably less commotion in SED than in the other East European Communist parties. Ulbricht and his colleagues lost no time in jumping on the anti-Stalinist bandwagon, but there was little or no evidence of a substantive shift in policy, and any hopes of a change in leadership were dashed by Moscow's apparent intention not to sacrifice Stalin's East German protégés as scapegoats for past mistakes.

Economic Stalinization

IN the political sphere, then, the East German picture is one of stubborn resistance by the party leadership to pressures toward liberalization. As the June 1953 revolt indicated, however, these pressures are most persistent and immediate in the economic sphere and are similarly the result of the application of Stalinist policies.

Immediately after the war the East German Communists promised to respect the ownership and management rights of the more affluent peasants, unhindered development of free enterprise and individual initiative based on private property, and improvements in collective agreements governing work conditions and wages. These promises were abandoned, however, as soon as one-party rule had been firmly established. Discrimination in favor of producer goods industries at the expense of the consumer became more and more pronounced, and increasing priority was given to expanding the collectivized sector of the economy.

The pattern of East German economic planning, still in an experimental stage in the Two-Year Plan of 1949-50, became clear with the adoption of the first Five-Year Plan in 1950. By then East Germany's worst war wounds had healed, but its economic recovery was still well behind that of other orbit countries. The condition of agriculture was particularly poor, making inevitable the continuation of food rationing for years to come. Yet the main emphasis of the plan was placed on the development of heavy industry and its fuel and metal bases. This emphasis was further intensified in 1951 in response to mounting East-West tension accompanying the Korean war.

The changes made in 1951 were hasty and lacking in cohesion. Overall production targets were not closely coordinated with the raw material, labor and investment requirements of the plan, and, as a result, strains and

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stresses became visible throughout the economy. Yet Ulbricht continued to insist that full priority be given to the output of producer goods as "the only possible way to raise production without interruption and to guarantee that output always remains in step with the highest technical development."[6]

The softer economic policies inaugurated in the Soviet Union after Stalin's death at least brought a responsive slackening of the pace of heavy industrial development in East Germany. In its statement of June 9, 1953, acknowledging past errors, the Politburo proposed certain modifications of economic policy which became known as the "new course." The ensuing uprising nipped hopes of political liberalization in the bud, but the Politburo's promise of economic reform was not immediately retracted. At the end of June Ulbricht reiterated: "We have pushed too far ahead. . . . We are going to correct the errors." [7]

Before the proposed policy changes could become effective, however, they were withdrawn. The result was that economic strains again became blatantly apparent within a year after the supposed introduction of the "new course." This led in turn to sharp dissension within the party hierarchy over the question of alloting a higher priority to the consumer sector of the economy in relation to heavy industry. The controversy, which was paralleled in other parts of the orbit, was finally resolved by the Soviet decision, announced in *Pravda* on January 24, 1955, in favor of continuing heavy priorities for industries producing basic materials and capital goods. Ulbricht echoed this line in June 1955 by denouncing the "new course" as misconceived and declaring "the expansion of heavy industry to be the basic aim of economic policy." [8]

Progress and Weaknesses

In spite of the incompleteness and sometimes suspect nature of the available official documentation, however, enough is known about the East German economy to permit an assessment of its progress and present condition. Considering the zigzags in economic planning, the results achieved are undoubtedly considerable. Overall industrial production targets have supposedly been met or overfulfilled, although the official claim of overfulfillment appears questionable in the light of the laggard performances of some individual industries. The agricultural and building programs have admittedly failed. But even where the planned goals were not reached, the annual rates of growth are still substantial.

Industrial output and gross national product are claimed to have risen during the first Five-Year Plan by 90 and 60 percent respectively, representing annual growth rates of 14 and 10 percent. When distortions are eliminated, the actual increases appear to have been approximately half the claimed figures, with annual growth rates of 8 and 5.5 percent respectively. On the other hand, the official claim that agricultural production increased by more than 40 percent can only be regarded as absurd in view of the fact that the regime's repeated promises to end food rationing, affecting meat, dairy products and sugar, still remain unfulfilled.

While living standards appear to have improved at least during certain periods of the first Five-Year Plan, the improvement is considerably less than officially claimed and still leaves the East German consumer, in both the rural and the urban industrial areas, with a lower standard of living, than before the war. The reasons for this are not hard to find. Whereas two-thirds of the total prewar output of goods and services in Eastern Germany was available for private consumption, only a little more than half was available for such use at the end of the first Five-Year Plan. Moreover, throughout the period of the plan, investment in consumer industries and housing was limited to 7 and 15 percent, respectively, of total investments, as compared with more than 40 percent allocated to heavy industry.

The year 1956 marked the beginning of a new Five-Year Plan, but not of a new policy. Indeed, the 1956-60 program reveals no trace of the mood of confession and concession which prevailed for a brief period after the 1953 uprising. The East German regime today, of all the Soviet satellite regimes, appears least desirous of breaking with the past. Referring to the second Five-Year Plan, in March 1956, Ulbricht reasserted that there must be no departure from "the Marxist-Leninist principle of priority for heavy industry." [9]

The past year has seen still further moves toward closer East German economic integration in the Soviet bloc. In May 1956, a conference of all the orbit regimes in East Berlin discussed the coordination of economic development under the current Five-Year Plans of the orbit countries. East Germany's special responsibilities, as fixed at the conference, are heavy engineering, heavy chemicals, and mechanical, optical and electro-technical equipment. However, fulfillment of these responsibilities is likely to be substantially impaired for some time by the interruption of coal and coke supplies from Poland and of bauxite

[6] *Taegliche Rundschau,* November 23, 1952.

[7] Statement broadcast by Radio East Berlin, June 30, 1953.

[8] *Neues Deutschland,* June 10, 1955.

[9] *Neues Deutschland,* March 25, 1956.

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shipments from Hungary. Addressing a gathering of steelworkers in December 1956, Prime Minister Grotewohl pessimistically admitted that because of the Polish and Hungarian disturbances "we will be unable to reach the targets set for the period of the second Five-Year Plan." [10]

The trade and credit concessions obtained by Premier Grotewohl during his January visit to Moscow may ease current difficulties somewhat, but will not remove them. Taken all together, Soviet economic concessions will make available approximately 1,000,000 DM (East) per year. But as the cost of the recent increases in wages and pensions and of price concessions tends to surpass the amount of Soviet aid, inflationary pressures will also tend to continue, if not increase.

Future Prospects

IN the last analysis, however, political developments rather than economic trends will decide East Germany's future. Confronted by the triumph of "national communism" in Poland and the ominous example of the Hungarian popular revolt against Communist rule, the East German party leadership is at last beginning to manifest a degree of nervousness which seems quite out of proportion to the relatively minor expressions of public discontent that have thus far occurred. Telling evidence of the mood of anxious uncertainty among party leaders has been furnished by a new spate of official promises of economic concessions—reduced working hours, termination of rationing, and establishment of factory committees.

Although the party leadership thus appears to be on the defensive, there are manifold factors which militate against the likelihood of any imminent and drastic upheaval in East Germany. These may be briefly summarized as follows:

First, despite noticeable ferment in intellectual and student circles—manifested in resolutions demanding abolition of the compulsory teaching of the Russian language and Marxism-Leninism—and continuing unrest among the workers, the harsh consequences of the 1953 uprising are still fresh in the memory of those who are tempted to undertake fresh political action. Moreover, in the absence of any hope of Western armed support, demonstrated both in 1953 and in the recent Hungarian crisis, the presence of almost half a million Soviet troops on East German soil operates as a chilling reminder of the fate East Germany would certainly suffer in the event of an uprising on the Hungarian scale.

Secondly, no split such as developed in Poland has yet become apparent in the East German Communist leadership. Prime Minister Otto Grotewohl, evidently in basic accord with Ulbricht, is no German Cyrankiewicz. Dahlem now toes the official party line, and Ackermann is reported suffering from illness. Zaisser, the suppressor of the 1953 uprising, hardly emerges as a likely champion of popular forces for liberalization; nor does Fred Oelssner, who was recently relegated from the editorship of the party theoretical organ, *Einheit,* to a less influential position in charge of supply matters. Paul Mercker, another formerly influential party leader purged in 1949, has reportedly visited Warsaw since Gomulka's return to power and may be regarded as the most likely potential challenger to Ulbricht's Stalinist policies. Yet he may well hesitate to come out in the open for fear that any major policy upheaval would topple the whole structure of party rule.

A third obstacle to revolutionary changes is the absence of any effective forces of political opposition outside of SED. The present leaders of the CDU and LDP, though dissatisfied, lack the caliber to mobilize political resistance, and most of them are already too deeply committed to collaboration with the Communists to be able to regain their freedom of action. Because of this deficiency of capable non-Communist leadership, the largely passive opposition of the intellectual, student and Protestant Church groups stand slight chance of being galvanized into an articulate and active political force.

Finally, although the economic situation remains unsatisfactory, it has nevertheless improved to some degree in recent years. Living standards are still low, but shortages of consumer goods have now eased to the point of mere irritation rather than real hardship. Conditions of work and wage levels also remain unsatisfactory, but the regime's new promises, if carried out, may serve to take the sharp edge off the workers' discontent.

Still, it would be wrong to assume that East Germany's Communist leaders face smooth sailing ahead. With vacillation and uncertainty evident at the fountainhead of orbit policy, these most obedient of Soviet servants probably are suffering acutely from the lack of direction from Moscow. The bankruptcy of their own formula of combining economic appeasement with undiminished political repression is becoming more and more evident, and they find themselves facing the painful necessity of re-appraising all that communism stands for. In the light of these factors, it is very possible that 1957 will witness developments in East Germany of critical import for the troubled Soviet empire.

[10] *Ibid.,* December 13, 1956.

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Communist Tactics in Asia and Africa

Lucian W. Pye:
Guerrilla Communism in Malaya,
Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1956

W. Macmahon Ball:
Nationalism and Communism in East Asia,
Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1956

George Padmore:
Pan-Africanism or Communism?,
Dennis Dobson, London, 1956.

Walter Z. Laqueur:
Communism and Nationalism in the Middle East,
Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1956.

Reviewed by Guy Wint

THE four books under review assess the strength of communism in three of the main regions where the Soviet Union seeks to expand its influence—South Asia, Africa and the Middle East. Collectively the authors supply a mass of new information, correct some existing interpretations and offer new ones on this critical subject, commenting with imagination and sympathy on the copious documentation which they have assembled. Two of the books, those of Mr. Pye and Mr. Laqueur, deserve special commendation; they are likely to be the standard sources on their subjects for some time to come.

Mr. Pye writes about communism in Malaya. While he stresses the national peculiarities of the movement, he regards it as typical of communism in all the Asian countries, and his generalizations on the area as a whole are of particular value.

Mr. Pye points out that most Asian Communist parties were founded as study groups by intellectuals without political experience. Fascinated by Marxist doctrine, they were nevertheless hazy about its precise content, and their early efforts consisted largely of attempts to dissect and grasp the experience of European Marxists and apply them in Asia. This search for intellectual illumination quickly became confused with, and even substituted for, the struggle for political power. Symptomatic was the fact that the early Asian Communist leaders interpreted the Russian revolution as a victory of the ideas of communism over the Tsarist empire; they failed to see that an essential point of Leninism is to gain political power by whatever means seem propitious at a particular moment. Accordingly they believed that orthodox Communist ideas, if disseminated in their own lands, would of themselves bring about the collapse of the established order, without much more activity on the part of the Communist rank and file than the peaceful propagation of the doctrine. Even those young Communists who were willing to engage in conspiratorial activity felt that power must be sought by orthodox means, which could be discovered through a careful reading of Marxist scripture. They did not see that the essence of Leninism was opportunism, lightly disguised as orthodoxy.

Mr. Pye points to the contrast between the barrenness of Asian Communist thought and the creativeness of prerevolutionary European Marxist thought as a partial explanation for the slow spread of communism in Asia. The early Communists insisted on applying in Asia precisely the same tactics which were being used by the European Communist parties. As a result, they were slow to exploit peasant discontent and the nationalist movements. One of the reasons for this attitude was the extreme sensitivity of the Asian leaders concerning the comparative economic and educational backwardness of their countries. This inhibited them from developing ideas of their own lest they seem to have accepted the principle that theirs were second-class countries capable only of second-class communism.

The transformation of early "textbook" communism into an active revolutionary movement was brought about, paradoxically, by the extremely restrictive pres-

Mr. Wint, free-lance writer and correspondent for the *Manchester Guardian,* is the author of *Spotlight on Asia* (Penguin Books, 1956).

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sures exerted by Asian government, both native and colonial, on indigenous Communists. Faced with extermination, the Asian Communist parties had either to perish or cease relying on theory and adopt flexible tactics. Many of the early leaders dropped by the wayside, says Mr. Pye:

> Those who remained with the movement saw that their mission was to apply in an Asian setting the Leninist principles of an elite party exploiting existing conditions to gain revolutionary power . . . Once the Asian leaders recovered from their initial awe of Marxism, they became extremely impatient for revolution. Thus, the early study-group atmosphere of these parties was replaced by an extraordinarily open concern with questions of tactics.

Mao Tse-tung's blueprint for power in China and more recently the guerrilla war in Malaya exemplify this basic change in Asian communism.

A major part of Mr. Pye's study is devoted to the rank and file of the Asian parties. He poses the vital question: What makes a young Asian become a Communist activist? What keeps him loyal to his party chiefs? What causes him—as has happened to many in Malaya—to lose faith and defect? To get answers the author interrogated sixty Malayan Communists who had come in from the jungle and surrendered. While this number is not large, the composite picture of their case histories is interesting.

The author finds that in Malaya—and probably in most other Asian countries threatened with communism—the main attraction of the movement is not its doctrines, nor its appeal to national feeling, nor its promise of relief from poverty, nor its promise to do away with exploiters. These are contributory but by no means decisive factors. The magic of communism is that it appears as a kind of crutch to carry the youth of Asia over the very difficult present period in which, because of the forces of change working in Asia, the entire structure of traditionalist society is breaking down. His faith in the old institutions and values destroyed, the individual is apt to feel terribly alone and unsheltered, his path through life no longer carefully prescribed at all stages by custom, as it was in the past.

In this situation communism offers a new authority, a seemingly consistent framework of ideas, apparent clarity of purpose, promising prospects for the future. These were the positive goals which many Chinese in Malaya were seeking when they took to the rigors of guerrilla life in the jungle. One of the young men whom Mr. Pye interviewed used a very illuminating phrase to describe his feelings in joining the party. "I felt," he said, "as if I had climbed on the back of a tiger. I had the power of the tiger. I moved as he moved." The search for the same feeling of power, for the same solution of their personal frustration, led many young recruits to join the Communist movement.

The emphasis on Asian youth's search for new values emerges equally, if in somewhat different context, in Macmahon Ball's *Nationalism and Communism in East Asia.* A major theme of Mr. Ball's study is that Western institutions and values, such as capitalism, individualism and liberalism, have little appeal for Asian youth, except perhaps in India. Indeed, many of them consider these the forces which have disrupted Asian society. In the disintegrating society of Asia today, the young seek a stable body of beliefs on which to rely, and many are likely to look for this in some form of authoritarianism. Communism's claim to have found the key to an ordered society is thus the secret of its appeal. Mr. Ball also attributes importance to the poverty of the Asian masses. He says, however, that it is not poverty itself, but the way in which Asian youth thinks about poverty which makes Asia susceptible to communism. People revolt against their poverty only when something else has stirred them to discontent, and when there seem to be positive alternatives.

The author does not hold the pessimistic view, however, that all Asia will necessarily go Communist. There are still 700 million uncommitted people in Asia; and many of their leaders are aware that the Soviet Union would not hesitate to use the Asian countries as expendable pawns in the cold war. They are determined to prevent this from happening.

Mr. George Padmore's book about communism in Africa suggests that African leaders are even more suspicious of Soviet intentions than are the Asians. The Communists' clear aim in Africa has long been exploitation and domination of the nationalist movement. At first, however, Moscow's policy was incredibly inept. Communists in South Africa, for example, were ordered in 1928 to cease agitating for racial equality and equal citizenship and instead to demand a "native republic", a demand which actually anticipated Dr. Malan's apartheid plan. These instructions were personally approved by Stalin and transmitted to Africa with the full backing of the Comintern and the Soviet Union. The plan nonetheless caused a bitter split among African Communist leaders and was eventually dropped.

In subsequent years Moscow's policy in Africa seemed to be deliberately calculated to frustrate unity among African nationalist leaders. The Communists infiltrated all types of organizations, insinuated themselves into positions of leadership, then rent these groups with their doctrinal disputes. The struggle left the nationalist

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movement leaderless. As Mr. Tabat, one of the principle African nationalists, commented:

It has long been the Communist Party line either to control or to kill an organization. It cannot tolerate a movement which is not dominated by itself.

It must not be thought, however, that the Soviet Union will continue the same type of discredited leadership it practiced in the 1930's and 1940's. Recently, as Mr. Padmore shows, Moscow has been changing its erroneous ideas about Africa and has radically overhauled its program of African studies. In the author's view the future may see a more intelligent and organized attempt by the Communists to exploit nationalist stirrings in this vast continent.

The final book under review is Walter Z. Laqueur's impressive study of communism in the Middle East—a veritable encyclopedia of the events and personalities which have shaped the movement in that area. *Communism and Nationalism in the Middle East* is far more than a solid reference volume, however; Mr. Laqueur's cogent analysis and conclusions provide valuable insights into the general nature of Communist activity in the Middle Eastern countries, differentiating it from Communist activity elsewhere and pointing up the problems which it creates for the rest of the world. The Communist parties in the Arab countries, it is shown, consist essentially of the intelligentsia and the middle class, and put little effort into seeking support among the masses. They do not expect to come to power through a mass revolt or through large-scale agrarian civil war on the lines of the "People's Liberation Movements" in Asia. Instead they rely on their superior resolution, clear purpose, and well-trained organization to enable them to seize the government during some moment of crisis, some period of confusion or emergency—without any need for the participation of the masses.

Mr. Laqueur disputes the theory that Islam can provide a "bulwark" against communism. "Traditional Islamic autocracy," he says, quoting Professor Bernard Lewis, "rests on three pillars: bureaucracy, the army, and the religious hierarchy; only the third factor, the religious hierarchy, need be changed in order to prepare the way for a Communist state." Religious convictions persist among some of the leaders and to an extent among the masses, but not sufficiently so to withstand the appeals of Communist dogma.

The best defense against communism, as the author sees it, is to carry through, within the shortest possible time, the social, political and economic changes which have taken a century in Europe. The program poses a formidable but not impossible task—and it is the direction toward which the more constructive elements of Middle Eastern leadership attempt to move.

A Case Study of Soviet Colonialism

Baymirza Hayit:
Turkestan in XX. Jahrhundert
(Turkestan in the 20th Century)
C. W. Leske Verlag, Darmstadt, 1956, 406 pp.

Reviewed by Richard A. Pierce

A "prison of peoples" was Lenin's one-time epithet for Imperial Russia. That the term can be applied equally well to the USSR today has been proved by an increasing body of evidence amassed in recent years, as careful scholarship has provided an ever-clearer picture of the nature of the Soviet system and its impact upon subject peoples.

Mr. Pierce is a specialist in the history of Russian expansion and rule in Central Asia.

To this documentation Dr. Baymirza Hayit's book on the recent history of Turkestan (Soviet Central Asia) is an impressive addition. As a native Turkestanian the author has known Soviet rule at first hand, and his linguistic background and personal contacts have given him access to source material unavailable to most Western scholars. In this, the first volume in a series of German-language country studies *(Forschungen zur neuen Geschichte der Völker Osteuropas und Asiens* [Studies toward a New History of the East European and Asiatic Peoples], edited by Gerhard von Mende), Hayit provides what is at once a detailed survey and a guide to further research. As such it will be more useful to scholars than Sir Olaf Caroe's recent, more popularly written *Soviet Empire,* (London: MacMillan, 1953) and will supplement Zeki Velidi Togan's Bügünkü Türkeli

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(Türkistan) ve yakın trihi (Modern Turkestan and its Most Recent History, 2nd ed., Instanbul, 1947), which unfortunately has not been published in any Western language.

In his lengthy introductory chapter, Mr. Hayit shows something of Turkestan's rich past before the Russian conquest of the last century. He then paints the rise of national consciousness under Imperial Russian rule—the groping toward reform and modernization of the native culture, which unfortunately came too late to allay popular tensions and to avert the uprisings of 1916, with their catastrophic aftermath of panic and reprisal. The futile efforts of native intellectuals toward independence or autonomy after the revolution of March 1917, the Bolshevik seizure of power, and the confusion of the Civil War period are also carefully reconstructed by the author.

The main portion of Mr. Hayit's study is devoted to Moscow's enforced transformation of the native economic, political and social structure of Turkestan to make it fit the procrustean bed of the Soviet system. Nationalization and redistribution of land and water resources gave the Soviet government control over the basic means of production and shattered the power of the social groups most inclined to resist. The nomads were forced into settlements to provide labor for governmental plans in industry and agriculture. Under forced collectivization the peasants were made to abandon traditional crops and to concentrate on cotton.

In the political sphere the Soviet regime sought to prevent a rise in native national feeling by subdividing the region into several "republics" and imposing artificial linguistic and cultural barriers. Natives were admitted to the state and party apparatus, but control remained in the hands of outsiders.

Ostensibly "progressive" measures in the social and cultural spheres have been aimed primarily at consolidating Moscow's control; only incidentally have they benefited the native population. The emancipation of women struck at the traditional family structure. Soviet methods of education have served to lessen the influence of the recalcitrant older generation on the minds of the youth. The Moslem religion, earlier the dominant feature in native culture, has been subjected to constant pressure directed toward its attrition and ultimate extirpation. Periodic purges have emphasized the regime's inexorable demand for total conformity and integration.

These aspects of Soviet rule have, of course, been treated in a number of previous studies. The main merit of Hayit's volume is that it fills in the general structure of known facts with a wealth of additional documentary material. An almost encyclopedic amount of information is contained in its text, footnotes and lengthy bibliography, making it an indispensable guide to further research and writing on Turkestan's modern history.

One may wonder, however, what direction that research is to take. Nearly forty years of Soviet rule in Central Asia have inevitably served to break down former living patterns and to mold the natives to the desired form more easily. There are still social and economic "survivals of the past" to be overcome, and perennial manifestations of "deviationism" and nationalism to be rooted out, but each passing year brings control more firmly into the hands of the central authority, and makes the native cause more hopeless. Today the region's inhabitants play their assigned role as producers of raw materials to feed the great Soviet economic machine. The recent flood of Russian and Ukrainian settlers into Kazakhstan under the "new lands" program, to be followed by more settlers upon completion of irrigation projects in the other Central Asian republics, underscores what seems already a virtual *fait accompli:* the reduction of the natives to a minority in their own land.

In the face of this situation it is not enough merely to chronicle accomplished facts, to document injustice, or to compile wordy indictments—these are mere scholarly exercises which, to use Soviet parlance, are "remote from life." It seems to the reviewer that at least some of the research and analysis in this field should aim at assessing the future consequences of Soviet colonialism. Among the questions which arise: Must the Turkestanians, along with the other non-Russian peoples of the USSR, ultimately be written off in a national sense? If such is the case, what is the potential significance for the western world? Or will the USSR eventually be affected by the trend toward self-determination of peoples, which in a single generation has brought sovereignty to many millions in other parts of the globe? Finally, what are the guide-posts of a consistent, wise policy regarding all national minorities and peoples in the less-developed areas of the world? There are still no ready answers to these questions, and research must play a large part in providing them.

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The Hungarian "Counterrevolution"

EDITORS' NOTE: The "justification" for Soviet intervention in Hungary has been the claim, repeated *ad nauseam* by Soviet and official foreign Communist sources alike, that the aim of the insurgents was the restoration of an exploitative system of capitalism and a return to the prewar Horthyite regime, and that the rebels were, in fact, "fascists," and "agents of foreign espionage services," who indulged in a reign of "white terror" during the short-lived Nagy regime. How youths of fourteen and fifteen years (of whom there were many in the ranks of the revolutionaries), born and raised in a "socialist" country, could possibly hanker for a return to a thoroughly hated and discredited political system is one of those mysteries that only the Marxist-Leninist philosophers can fathom. Logic notwithstanding, however, the persistence and seriousness of these allegations necessitate a closer look at the actual political program and demands of the thousands of Hungarians who fought with rifles and "Molotov cocktails" against the tanks and artillery of their one-time "liberators."

The first article below, written by one of the leaders and participants of the Hungarian Revolution, lists the political parties which emerged during the Nagy regime and examines the specific utterances and programmatical statements of their leaders, which give the lie to the Soviet claim that the reconstituted parties represented "reaction."

The second item comes from an even more compelling source. It is reprinted from a chapter in a book published recently by Peter Fryer, a young British Communist, correspondent of the London *Daily Worker*, who was sent by his paper to cover the uprising in Hungary and who witnessed its most heroic two-week period, October 26 to November 11. What he saw was enough to shatter totally his faith in the myth of a glorious Communist future. With his own eyes he saw a nation rising *en masse*—"not", he notes bitterly, "for the restoration of capitalism," but for an end to Soviet occupation and the one-party dictatorship. His fervent dispatches to his home paper were (at first) censored beyond recognition or suppressed altogether. His last dispatch, in fact, describing the Soviet slaughter in Budapest, was withheld from his own staff by the editor of the *Daily Worker*. It was at that point that Fryer decided to resign from the paper. His resignation, and the publication of *The Hungarian Tragedy* (Dennis Dobson, London, 1956) was followed by his suspension, and then expulsion from party ranks.

Parties and Programs in the Revolution

IN 1945, Hungary elected its own Parliament. Fifty-five per cent of the popular vote went to the Smallholders' Party and only 17 per cent was won by the Communist Party. Yet between 1945 and 1948, the Communist Party succeeded, with the direct help of the Soviet occupation army, and by employing what Rakosi later termed "salami tactics"—*i.e.*, terror, pressure, intimidation—to liquidate the democratic parties, and to establish a one-party dictatorship.

Terror and repression, however, were not enough to eradicate the deep-seated desire for political democracy, shared by all non-Communist Hungarians, regardless of party affiliation. It did not come as a surprise, therefore, to see the demand for free elections and the abolition of the one-party state emerge as the dominant theme of the Hungarian Revolution. Thus the famous 16 points adopted by the university students at their mass rally held on October 22 included these demands. And on October 23, the day that the Revolution began, the chairman of the Hungarian Writers' Union, Peter Veles, declared: "The people should elect, by secret ballot, their representatives to parliament and to all the autonomous organs of our administration."

The brutal Soviet intervention only helped to strengthen the determination of the insurgents, and to reactivate the democratic political forces that had lain dormant during the years of Stalinist repression. On October 27, Nagy announced the formation of the first coalition government, including, for the first time in ten years, representatives of the Smallholders' party —Zoltan Tildy and Bela Kovacs. But no longer would the Hungarian people be content with half-way measures. The pressure for the abolition of the political monopoly of the Communist Party steadily mounted, finally forcing Nagy to make the following electrifying announcement on October 30:

Hungarian workers, peasants, intellectuals. As a result of the revolution . . . and the mighty movement of democratic forces our nation has reached the crossroads. The national government, acting in complete agreement with the Presidium of the Hungarian Workers' [*i.e.*, Communist] Party, has arrived at a decision

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vital to the nation's life . . . In the interests of further democratization . . . the Cabinet has abolished the one-party system and has decided that we should return to a system of government based on the democratic co-operation of the coalition parties as they existed in 1945.

This was a momentous decision. A new government was formed, and the postwar Hungarian political parties reappeared on the political scene, full of vigor and enthusiasm. On November 3 the cabinet was again reorganized, this time including more members of the parties that participated in the coalition government of 1945.

Of all the rejuvenated parties, the Smallholders' Party has been, traditionally, the largest and the most popular. Founded in 1930, it functioned as an opposition party during the years of the Horthy regime, and was suppressed during the German occupation. Its leaders were seized, arrested, and sent to concentration camps. After the war, the Smallholders emerged as the majorty party, and remained so until 1947, when the Communists finally succeeded in banishing them from the political arena. During the brief postwar period of independence, the party was headed by Bela Kovacs, its Secretary General. The Communists were long out for his scalp, but since the Hungarian Parliament was unwilling to deprive him of his constitutional immunity, the Soviet military command decided to take matters into their own hands. In 1947 Kovacs was arrested, and then sent to the Soviet Union, where he remained until his release and return to Hungary shortly before the Revolution.

Although the Smallholders' Party—as any other political grouping during the Revolution—had little time to formulate policy in all its ramifications, its underlying philosophy may be seen from the following remarks made by Bela Kovacs on October 31:

No one should dream of going back to the world of counts, bankers and capitalists: that world is over once and for all. A true member of the Smallholders' Party cannot think along the lines of 1939 or 1945.

On November 3, upon joining the new cabinet, he stated:

In order to solve the difficult foreign political tasks we must establish national unity. Further, it is necessary and of vital importance that, since our peasantry is working in the field for our next year's bread, industrial workers should also begin production without delay.

The aim, then, was not "anarchy" designed to bring about "foreign" (*i.e.*, American) intervention, but rather the restoration of both freedom and order in the revolt-ridden country.

The Social-Democratic Party was reconstituted on October 31. Though traditionally the Socialists were bitter opponents—as well as rivals—of the Communists, the latter had been able to infiltrate the party, to purge some of its leaders, and to force others to acquiesce at the forced merger with the CP in June 1948. Anna Kethly, Vice Chairman of the Hungarian Parliament between 1945 and 1947, was one of those who strenuously opposed the Communist onslaught, and who was consequently "rewarded" for her efforts by long years of imprisonment and exile. Now elected President of the party, she published the following statement in the party newspaper *Nepszava* (November 1):

The formation of the S.D.P. cannot provide a refuge for those who have been the cause of this horrible political, economic and moral failure.

They must account for their actions. Yet this can only be achieved in so far as workers of good-will, anxious about the fate of their fatherland and ready to make a constructive effort, succeed in creating calm and order.

Freed from one prison, let us not allow the country to become a prison of another color. Let us watch over the factories, the mines and the land which must remain in the hands of the people.

Gyula Keleman, who was arrested in 1947, tortured for several months by the A.V.H., and "tried" (without confessing to the sundry charges) in March 1948, was elected Secretary General. Here are excerpts from his article in *Nepszava* (November 2):

In 1948 the Hungarian S.D.P. was forcibly buried. Hundreds of its leaders were put in prison. Thousands of others were arbitrarily interned. . . .

Many of them have died in prison—but the party has been reborn. Hundreds of thousands of organized workers throughout the country are enthusiastically setting up the S.D.P. . . . Let us take control again, as we did in Budapest, of the trade union organizations, which were taken away from us by force, so that they may again become the bulwarks of the workers' cause.

Let our fighting peasants unite their forces to frustrate all attempts to restore the large estates . . . At the cost of bitter sufferings our people have learnt that the extreme right and left can only lead us to destruction and slavery.

The National Peasant Party was the third member of the coalition government in 1945. Based on a group of radical intellectual experts on the peasant question, the party was reorganized on November 1 under the new name of the Petoefi Party, in honor of the great Hungarian poet of the Hungarian Independence War of 1848. Ferenc Farkas, who had been second secretary in 1945-47, was now elected Secretary General. On November 3, he issued a statement, several points of which are particularly significant:

1. The government will retain from the Socialist achievements and results everything which can and must be used in a free, democratic and Socialist country in accordance with the desires of the people.

2. We want to retain the sincerest and warmest friendly economic and cultural relations with every Socialist country even after we have obtained neutrality. . . .

3. Party interests must be subordinated to those of the nation. . . .

7. The government will most energetically prevent any kind of anarchistic or counterrevolutionary demonstrations. Should such demonstrations take place, we will punish them.

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The Hungarian Workers' (*i.e.*, Communist) Party, which virtually disintegrated during the Revolution, attempted to salvage its position in Hungarian political life by appearing under a new name—the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party. With Imre Nagy at the helm, it consisted of those Communists who identified themselves with the Revolution, and who, indeed, had suffered at the hands of Rakosi & Co. It is noteworthy that Janos Kadar, who later did his best to ingratiate himself with the Kremlin, at first had only praise for the revolutionaries. Here is a typical statement of his, made on November 1:

Hungarian workers, peasants and intellectuals . . . In a glorious uprising our people have shaken off the Rakosi regime. They have achieved freedom for the people and independence for the country, without which there can be no socialism . . . We are proud that you have stood your ground honestly in the armed uprising . . . You were permeated by true patriotism and loyalty to Socialism . . .

Workers, peasants and intellectuals! The new party, the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party, is prepared to do its share in fighting for the consolidation of independence and democracy . . . We turn to the newly-formed democratic parties . . . with the request that they help consolidate the government. . . .

These, then, were the parties and major political platforms that made their appearance during the Revolution. There were also two other political groups, the Christian Democrats, and the Hungarian Independence Party, whose major political demands were similar to those of the other parties, but they were small, and played only minor roles in the political ferment that swept the country in those days. However great the ferment, and however large the number of parties that sprang up at that time, the main goal toward which all of them strived was so unanimously popular that the differences of the political programs remained in the background for the time being. The goals can best be understood by referring again to several of the 16 points adopted by Hungarian youth on the eve of the Revolution:

1. The withdrawal of Soviet troops from Hungary in accordance with the Peace Treaty of 1947.
2. The withdrawal of Hungary from the Warsaw Pact and the declaration of the complete neutrality of the country.
3. Free elections with secret ballot, with all democratic parties participating.
4. Establishment of the basic human rights: freedom of speech, assembly, press and worship. In general, the establishment of a democratic order in place of terror and dictatorship.
5. Recognition of the right of the nation to decide its future social and economic order.

These demands expressly refute the charge that the Hungarian revolutionaries desired a restoration of the prewar order. As the basis of future development, the revolutionaries in fact accepted the existing economic forms, with the provision that the principles of equality and social justice would not be violated. They recognized and wished to preserve the land reform (but not collectivization) and nationalization of key industries. There was not a single point in their program which was not democratic both in essence and in form. But the main condition for building a new life was, of course, the end of the Soviet occupation, the end of the Communist dictatorship. And it was precisely for the sake of preserving its hold on Hungary that the Soviet Union decided to drown the Revolution in blood.

SANDOR KISS

Mr. Kiss, who participated in the Hungarian Revolution, and who is now residing in the United States, headed the Peasant Federaton before the Communists took power. It was then a nonpolitical organization representing peasant interests.

Revolution and Counterrevolution

An Excerpt from *The Hungarian Tragedy*, by Peter Fryer

THE Hungarian revolution was not a well-prepared plot by counterrevolutionary forces, but a genuine upsurge of the overwhelming majority of the Hungarian people, for whom life had become intolerable—an upsurge prepared for by the past thirty-seven years and called forth in particular by the blunders, crimes and trickery of the Stalinist leaders of the Communist Party. There are some who would accept this view, and who would deplore the initial Soviet intervention, but who would defend the second Soviet intervention as a regrettable, but bitter, necessity. Three arguments are advanced to support this defense. In the first place, it is said that the Nagy government as reconstituted on Saturday, November 3 had moved considerably to the Right, and was on the point of sliding still further to the Right, since it included people who wanted not merely to neutralize Hungary but to restore capitalism and landlordism. Secondly, it is held that a growing danger of counterrevolution, the increasing activity of reactionary forces throughout the

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country, which the Nagy government was powerless to check, made Soviet intervention imperative. (Cardinal Mindszenty's broadcast on the evening of November 3 is usually cited as proof.) Thirdly, the defenders of the second Soviet intervention claim that White Terror was raging in the country, and that prompt action by Soviet troops was needed to save the lives of Communists. I propose to try to answer these arguments in turn.

The character of the Nagy government on the eve of the Soviet attack, and the positions taken up by the parties represented in it, have been analyzed by Daniel Norman in an article in *Tribune* of November 23, 1956. The "Inner Cabinet" of three Communists and four non-Communists had been replaced by a Government consisting of two representatives of the Socialist Workers' (Communist) Party, three each from the Social-Democratic Party and the Smallholders' Party, two from the Petoefi (National Peasant) Party, and—what Norman does not mention—one representative of the revolutionary committees, Colonel Pal Maleter, who sat as Minister of War, and who was one of the two delegates arrested by the Russians. The suggestion seems to be that this charge meant a certain swamping of the Communists, and that the non-Communists in the coalition could not be trusted to retain socialism, but would pave the way for fascism.

To which it must be answered first, that this coalition was more truly representative of the Hungarian people than any government Hungary had known since 1947: it was a real people's front government, and, if the matter had been put to the test, would undoubtedly have enjoyed the trust of the national committees; and, secondly, that statements by responsible leaders of the three non-Communist parties in the coalition gave no grounds whatever for branding them as enemies of socialism. Their demand for neutrality, which Nagy supported, was no evidence of a slide to the right, nor of "open hostility . . . to the Soviet Union", nor of "repeated concessions . . . to the reactionary forces", as that shameful statement of the Executive Committee of the British Communist Party, issued only twelve hours after the Soviet attack began yet thoroughly approving it, sought to make out. As Norman concludes, far from being "reactionary forces", the parties associated in the coalition government of Imre Nagy on the eve of the Soviet attack were the only forces capable of dealing with the dispersed fascists, little groups of fascists or plain hooligans who had made their appearance lately among the revolutionary mass and perpetrated crimes condemned by everyone among the insurgents. Their number was not great. They had no possibility of organizing themselves. Only a government which had the backing of the overwhelming majority of the Hungarians, as Nagy's last government had, could have detected and dealt with them.

This brings us to the second question. Were reactionary forces becoming more active? Of course they were. Was there a danger of counterrevolution? It would be senseless to deny it. But the danger of counterrevolution is not the same thing as the success of counterrevolution. And between the two lay a powerful and significant barrier, which I for one was prepared to put my trust in: the will of the Hungarian people not to return to capitalism. As Bruce Renton wrote in *The New Statesman and Nation* on November 17:

Nobody who was in Hungary during the revolution could escape the overwhelming impression that the Hungarian people had no desire or intention to return to the capitalist system.

And remember that these people who wanted to retain socialism and improve it had arms in their hands; they were armed workers, armed peasants, armed students, armed soldiers. They had guns and tanks and ammunition. They had splendid morale. They were more than equal to any putsch, if one had been attempted. But they were never given the chance to prove it. It was none other than the Communist Party paper *Szabad Nep* which on October 29 indignantly rebuffed *Pravda's* article, "The collapse of the adventure directed against the people of Hungary". What happened in Budapest, said *Szabad Nep*, had not been directed against the people, it had not been an adventure, and it certainly had not "collapsed". The demands were demands for socialist democracy. *Pravda's* claim that the insurrection had been instigated by "Western imperialists" was an "insult to the whole population of Budapest". It was not imperialist intrigue which produced this "bloody, tragic, but lofty fight", but the Hungarian leadership's own "faults and crimes", and, in the first place, its failure to "safeguard the sacred flame of national independence". And *Szabad Nep* answered in advance the cry that counterrevolution obliged the Soviet Union to intervene:

The youth will be able to defend the conquests which they have achieved at the price of their blood, even against the counterrevolutionaries who have joined them. [The students and workers] have proved that they represent such a political force as is capable of becoming a guiding and irreplaceable force. . . . From the first moments of the demonstration and fighting they declared many times—and in the course of the fighting they proved it—that they were not against popular rule, that they were neither fascists nor counterrevolutionaries nor bandits.

As for the Mindszenty broadcast of November 3, the lengthy extracts quoted by Mervyn Jones in *Tribune* (November 30) make nonsense of Andrew Rothstein's claim that it "issued a program of capitalist restoration," and John Gollan's description of it as "the virtual signal for the counterrevolutionary coup". Mindszenty on the whole supported the Nagy government, and his one reference to private ownership came in a sentence beginning: "We want a classless society"! As Jones said, the speech was "reminiscent . . . of a Labor Party policy statement".

There is one further proof of how false was the claim that the Soviet troops went into action against reactionaries and fascists, and that is the indisputable fact that they were greeted, not with joy, as the Soviet communiques claimed, but with the white-hot, patriotic fury of a people in arms; and that it was the industrial workers who resisted them to the end. "Soviet troops

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are re-establishing order . . . We Soviet soldiers and officers are your selfless friends", said the Soviet communique of November 5. It was the proletariat of Hungary, above all, that fought the tanks which came to destroy the revolutionary order they had already established in the shape of their worker's councils. In my dispatch of November 11, I asked:

If the Soviet intervention was necessary to put down counterrevolution, how is it to be explained that some of the fiercest resistance of all last week was in the working-class district of Ujpect, in the north of Budapest, and Csepel, in the south—both prewar strongholds of the Communist Party? Or how is the declaration of the workers of the famous steel town of Sztalinvaros to be explained: that they would defend their Socialist town, the plant and houses they had built with their own hands, against the Soviet invasion?

Not only was no answer forthcoming to these questions, but the questions themselves never saw the light of day. The Stalinists in control of the *Daily Worker* backed the export of socialism in high explosive form against the bare-handed heroism of "Red Csepel". They took their stand on the wrong side of the barricades.

The third argument in favor of Soviet intervention is that there was "White Terror" raging in Hungary, and that for the Soviet Union to have refused to intervene would have been "inhuman". Leaving aside the still uncertain question of whether anyone ever did appeal to the Soviet Union to intervene, let us make quite sure what White Terror is. Just as Red Terror is the organized, systematic represson by a proletarian dictatorship of its counterrevolutionary opponents, so White Terror is the organized systematic repression by a bourgeois dictatorship of its revolutionary opponents.

Heaven help Andrew Rothstein and those others who call the state of affairs in Hungary on November 1, 2 and 3 "White Terror" if they ever come face to face with real White Terror. It is perfectly true that a section of the population of Budapest, outraged to the pitch of madness by the crimes of the secret police, was seized with a lust to exterminate Communists. It is true that the innocent suffered as well as the guilty. This is a painful and distressing fact. But to describe the murder of a number of Communists (which all observers agree was confined to Budapest) as "White Terror" necessitating Soviet intervention is to describe events in Hungary in a one-sided, propagandist way. How many innocent Communists were murdered in Budapest? Twenty? Fifty? I do not know. But certainly fewer—far, far fewer—than the number of A.V.H. men who were lynched. At the "Agony of Hungary" exhibition in London, and in all the hundreds of photographs I have seen, there was not a single one showing a lynched Communist. But there were many showing lynched A.V.H. men in their uniforms. There was one sequence showing a woman in civilian clothes being molested by a crowd, who accused her of being an A.V.H. spy. The caption stated that the crowd let her go.

Now the only circumstantial evidence for the murder of Communists is that put forward by André Stil in an article translated in *World News* of November 24. Stil arrived in Budapest on November 12, nine days after the second Soviet intervention. His article was published in *Humanité* on November 19. Even bearing in mind the assertion of Coutts and others I spoke to that forty of those killed in the Budapest Party headquarters were A.V.H. men, it is impossible to find Stil's account of the treatment of the seven Communists whom he names anything but convincing and horrible. Yet Stil is obviously performing the disagreeable task of a propagandist making the most of a small number of atrocities. His need to have the attack on the Party headquarters begin on October 30 makes him antedate the Soviet withdrawal from Budapest by three days; he describes "the vandals attacking the liberation monument built upon the Gellert Hill", whereas in fact the main figure was not attacked; and, worst of all, he mentions the A.V.H. and its crimes in the following curious and oblique way:

Many of those who were there did not at first believe that the party and its active members were being attacked, but that the attack was directed to the members of *a secret police about whom the most unlikely stories were being told.* (My italics—P. F.)

I have met Stil and have a great personal respect for him, as comrade, journalist, novelist and militant, but I should be dishonest if I did not say that the words I have italicized are unworthy of him. The truth about the "White Terror" has been told by Bruce Renton:

In the provinces, only the A.V.H. was physically attacked. *(New Statesman*, November 17) I had seen no counterrevolutionaries. I had seen the political prisoners liberated. . . . I had seen the executioners executed in the fury of the people's revenge. . . . But there was no "White Terror". The Communists walked free, the secret police were hanging by their boots. Where then was this counterrevolution, this White Terror? *(Truth*, November 16.)

The arguments in favor of the second Soviet intervention do not hold water. But even if Nagy had been making concessions all along the line to fascism, even if counterrevolution had succeeded, even if White Terror had been raging, it must be said, and said openly and with emphasis, that from the standpoint of Socialist principle the Soviet Union would still not have been justified in intervening. The Soviet aggression against Hungary was not merely immoral and criminal from the standpoint of the Hungarian people. It was a clear and flagrant breach of what Lenin called "that elementary Socialist principle . . . to which Marx was always faithful, namely, that no nation can be free if it oppresses other nations". November 4, 1956, saw the leaders of the Soviet Union defy Lenin's warning never to "slide, even in trifles, into imperialist relations with the oppressed nationalities, thereby undermining entirely our whole principle of sincerity, our principle of defense of the struggle against imperialism."

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Correspondence—

EDITOR'S NOTE: Readers are welcome to send communications dealing with matters discussed in *Problems of Communism*. Letters should be addressed to the Editors, *Problems of Communism*, U. S. Information Agency, 1776 P ennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington 25, D.C.

A MARKET ECONOMY FOR THE USSR?

In his article "Is Russia Going Titoist?" *(Problems of Communism*, No. 5, 1956) Mr. Halperin goes too far in saying that the Soviet Union "may be planning to adopt some of the basic elements of the Titoist system." The kind of internal Titoism which he mentions is making little headway in the Soviet Union: the various measures decentralizing the ministerial apparatus and encouraging "local initiative" may be "destalinization," but they do not represent Titosm in Mr. Halperin's definition. So far, the Soviets will have nothing to do with workers' councils in factories: this would be contrary to the principle of "the single authority" in enterprises which they have been at pains to emphasize as a counterweight to publicity against the cult of the individual.

More important, there is as yet no sign that the Soviet leaders are attracted by the idea of a "socialist market economy on the Titoist model. So far as can be judged, the policy in force is to extend the area covered by deliberate economic planning rather than to reduce it by encouraging any kind of market relationship.

This view is supported by an article published in *Pravda* of October 26, 1956, by B. Khomyakov, Deputy Chairman of the Sverdlovsk *Oblast* Planning Committee, and entitled "Elevate the Role of Local Planning Organs in Economic Construction." This title might indicate that Khomyakov advocates a step in the direction of Titoism, at any rate a call for decentralization. But in fact he calls for more planning, though on a local scale:

By the government's decision the *oblast* executive committee has been given the right to distribute local building materials produced by all *oblast* enterprises, irrespective of the agency to which they are subordinate. However, the volumes of production of local building materials are planned by ministries and departments without prior consultation with local planning organs. In this matter mistakes frequently occur. At the same time that building materials are in short supply, enterprises subordinate to union and republic ministries and departments work below capacity. It would be useful to grant local organs more authority in establishing the production plans and not to limit their role to mere distribution of the finished product.

It is clear that the aim here is to relate local production of building materials more closely to need. But it is recommended that this should be done by more planning rather than by introducing any kind of market relationship whereby the enterprises concerned would respond automatically to demand.

This is not to deny that the application even on a limited scale of the Titoist remedy of a degree of "market economy" would improve matters a lot in the Soviet Union. As Mr. Halperin points out, "a market economy is far better adapted to satisfy the demand for consumer goods than a totally planned economy." But so far there have been no discernible signs that the Soviet leaders are moving in this particular direction.

Cologne, Germany **Helmut Braunschweig**

CHINA, ITALY AND DESTALINIZATION

I would like to comment on the statement in Mr. G. F. Hudson's article "Moscow and Peiping: Seeds of Conflict?" [*Problems of Communism*, No. 6, 1956] that neither Chu Teh nor Palmiro Togliatti had "any foreknowledge of the impending onslaught on the memory of . . . [Stalin]."

This seems unlikely to me. We Budapest intellectuals —including non-party members—discussed as early as November, 1955, the agenda proposed for the forthcoming Twentieth Congress of the CPSU. We used a Russian-language brochure made available to us by a librarian of the Budapest Institute for Party History from a locked file of classified material. Among my close friends who read this brochure were Dr. Matuz (the Turkish expert), Dr. Szalai (chief librarian of the Budapest City Library), Dr. Manyai (of the Hungarian National Library), and Dr. Lazar (the historian, now working in Vienna on a Rockefeller grant). It was also generally known in Budapest that even the anti-regime members of the Hungarian Writers' Association knew in detail of the proposed agenda.

In view of these facts I am inclined to believe that the Chinese and Italian delegates were still trying, as the Congress opened, to avert the planned attack on Stalin. And I think it very probable that their opposition was a form of protest against the secret conspiracy by which the Central Committee of the CPSU confronted its "comrades" with a *fait accompli* before the official opening of the Congress.

Mexico City, Mexico **Dr. Desiderius Lang**

[*A doctor of philosophy and theology, the writer left Hungary during the revolution.*]

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IN FORTHCOMING ISSUES OF PROBLEMS OF COMMUNISM

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